

Handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly a signature or a name, rendered in white on a dark background.

fFortunes Stabílnes

**Charles of Orleans's
English Book of Love**

A Critical Edition

That he hath not all that he wolde desire
As in the prison of grevous displeaunce

my heart the schepre off this heche wydyng

7

Off
Hope hath a flesht wth lusty reconfort
To carry to the fayrest borne by wyng
Which is myn heuris lady and cheef resort
And if he may attayne the ioyfult port
In self passage y mene to his desire
The see of fortune playn to his plesere
A ioly wynd als blowing into fraunce
Where now abiding is my sovl maytres
Which is the swete of all my remembraunce
And hool tresoure of my worldly gladnes

all certis y moche am to hir biholdyng
For why y knowe bi very trewe report
That ayens danger which of ybit wyllyng
Hath longe on why hath doon me distourfort
That she hath raue the heer as in support
To helpe in all she kan this out of wece
y stonde for which y haue wth ioyfult chere
Sende hir this shype fulfillid of plessaunce
For only cause to stufte wth the fortres
Wherem thou doth kepe his affyaunce
And hool tresoure of my worldly gladnes

Therefore to detch make casfult depaunyng
Doubte thou and y we wel off on a oer

Fortunes Stabílnes

Charles of Orleans's English Book of Love

A Critical Edition

by

MARY-JO ARN

MEDIEVAL & RENAISSANCE TEXTS & STUDIES

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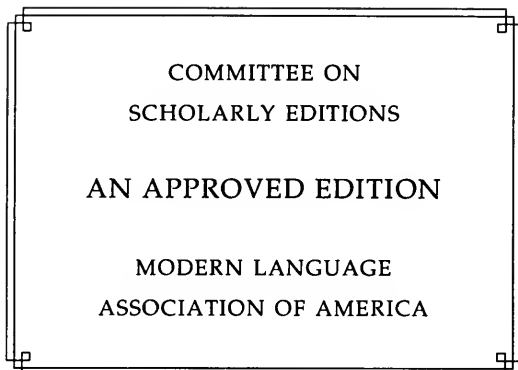
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VOLUME 138





The Committee's emblem indicates that this volume is based on an examination of all available relevant textual sources, that it is edited according to principles articulated in the volume, that the appropriate texts, both source and edited texts, are fully described, that the editorial principles, the text, and the apparatus have undergone a peer review, that a rigorous schedule of verification and proof reading was followed to insure a high degree of accuracy in the presentation of the edition, and that the text is accompanied by appropriate textual, critical and other historical information.

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☉ thow fool of alle mortel foolis!
Yif Fortune bygan to duelle stable,
she cessede thanne to ben Fortune.

—Chaucer's *Boece*, II,pr1.113–15

La seule victoire contre l'amour
c'est la fuite.

— French proverb

My n hert, thou fondist, bi this light,
To fle from Lovis company.
It kan not be, O fool, fy! fy!
Thou hast therto, parde, no myght.
Hath not Fortune þe bihight
To ben his servaunt to thou dey?

— *Fortunes Stabilnes*, 4263–68

Preface

This edition, published on the five hundredth anniversary of the birth of Charles of Orleans, is not designed primarily for the use of students (at one end of the spectrum) or of linguists. I have had in mind from the beginning a broad middle range of users: Chaucerians interested in Chauceriana, Middle English scholars with interests in the fifteenth century, in dream visions, in love literature, in courtly literature, in fixed-form verse, in the narrator, in Fortune, and so on, Old French scholars with interests in all of the above, as well as in the legacy of Machaut and other French writers, codicologists and scholars interested in book production, manuscript layout, transmission history, and reception, historians of the late Middle Ages, and many others. These poems, more than others of the period, are interesting for historical reasons as well as literary and linguistic ones, and it is my hope that not only scholars of Middle English language and literature but medievalists of many other persuasions will find this edition useful. Although linguists will find much here of interest to them, I have done no more than provide them with material in a usable form. I hope that the fuller glossary and my attempts at explanations of troublesome passages and at interpretation through punctuation will lead to serious work on what, in places, must surely be some of the strangest Middle English ever written.

It is interesting to compare the fate of Charles's English work with that of the *Kingis Quair*. As late as 1967, Derek Pearsall wrote that James's poem had "hardly been given the kind of attention it deserves, the question of authorship having diverted criticism from its main task of elucidation."¹ Since then the *Quair* has been re-edited twice and has attracted some careful critical analysis, whereas, with few exceptions, work on Charles's poem remains mired in arguments about the

¹ "The English Chaucerians," 226-27.

question of authorship, except when it is being plundered for material to describe the duke's personal life and feelings. In preparing this edition, which I have called *Fortunes Stabilnes* after one of the author's most striking phrases, an idea which serves to sum up the whole of his narrator's circumstance, I have worked from the premise that Charles of Orleans is the author of this work. All the significant evidence seems to me to point in that direction, and, having presented much of it in print, the burden of proof seems to me to lie now on those who would dispute his authorship of the poems. It may be that more external evidence will come to light, but more likely the only evidence we shall ever have to work with lies here in the poems themselves. If others can ask the right creative questions to force from the work itself some clearer answers to the doubts of some readers (and I have no doubt that such could and should be done), I will be pleased to adapt my own opinions to suit the evidence.

My thanks are due in the first place to the late Bernard F. Huppé, teacher and friend, in whose seminar on Allegory I first encountered this work and who encouraged me to publish my analyses of the work on Charles of Orleans. In 1984 I was invited to the Rossell Hope Robbins Research Center for Medieval Studies in Saugerties, New York, as an Honorary Visiting Scholar, where I was able to do some very concentrated preliminary work for this edition. I have missed Ross's help on the remainder of this volume and am sorry that he did not live to see the fruits of this work. In 1986–87 and again in 1987–88, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study provided me with the physical and mental space to make use of European resources in solving problems presented by this text. Similarly on this side of the Atlantic, the University of Pennsylvania welcomed me as a Visiting Scholar and provided the necessary resources for me to finish the job between 1988 and 1991. In 1992, Bloomsburg University gave me a release time grant to complete the revisions. I am grateful to these institutions and to their library staffs, especially to Dinny Young of NIAS. In addition, the staffs of the Royal Library (The Hague), of the British Library, and of the *Middle English Dictionary* have been most helpful. The British Library and the Musée Condé and Lauros-Giraudon have kindly given permission to reproduce the two manuscript pages in this book.

A number of friends and colleagues on both sides of the Sargasso Sea have read and commented on longer or shorter portions of my manuscript and answered many questions. Specific thanks to some are scattered through these pages; I am grateful to them all. For reading and commenting on parts of the manuscript my thanks to Jane Rob-

erts, Siegfried Wenzel, William Askins, Betsy Bowden, Sylvia Horowitz, and Erik Kooper. Lynnette Muir provided invaluable help on Charles's French, and Thomas Birrell, equally invaluable bibliographical information in the early stages of my work. The readers of the edition for MRTS saved me from many errors both of fact and of interpretation; I could not have chosen better. My thanks to Ralph Hanna, James Wimsatt, and Derek Pearsall (who has offered encouragement repeatedly over the years and whose work I have plundered regularly). John Hurt Fisher, who read the text for the Committee on Scholarly Editions, helped me think through my methods and presentation in the final stages of revision, and the edition is the better for it. I am grateful for his careful reading.

Three people require special thanks. In the years before the Oxford Concordance Program and other such helps for scholarly computer users, Shoji Yoshikawa devoted massive amounts of time to producing for me rhyme indexes, concordances, and other computer aids from the mainframe at the University of Groningen—aids that have proved to be invaluable in the intervening years. He has been the very best of colleagues. Ken Heinrich has been an indefatigable help with the edition, solving bibliographical problems, locating resources, devising problem-solving tactics, and resolving both electronic and strategic computer mysteries and crises. I appreciate most deeply his continued faith in this project and in my ability to do it justice. To those who know him, I need not explain the difference that Professor Johan Gerritsen has made to this project; to those who do not, no amount of explaining would make clear how profoundly his standards, his clearheadedness, and his plain hard work and good will have influenced my work. While hastening to claim the errors that remain for my own, I dedicate this volume to him. It is an honor to call him colleague and friend.

Introduction

The Poem

THE POEMS OF BRITISH LIBRARY, MS. Harley 682 were published first by George Watson Taylor in 1827 and again by Robert Steele and Mabel Day in the 1940s.¹ My primary purpose in re-editing the work is to make the poetry more accessible to the reader. This edition is therefore different in a number of respects from the Early English Text Society edition, which presented the text diplomatically and provided a minimum of lexical and contextual guidance to the reader. Although the scholar who specializes in late Middle English will be able to read from a diplomatically presented text, such texts are not made for reading, but for study. Those who object to the addition of punctuation as unwarranted editorial interference may be reminded of the lack of critical interest in the poems since the publication of the Steele and Day edition, occasioned by their difficulty and by the many questions surrounding them. Users of this volume will find the introduction, explanatory notes, and glossary to be fuller than those of the EETS edition. Critical and codicological work has advanced significantly since 1945, so there is simply more to report on the literary, linguistic, and manuscript context. The glossary records all spellings in the work, and

¹ The very inaccurate Watson Taylor edition (actually not much more than a transcription) was published in only forty-four copies (for full references to all sources, see Works Cited list). The Steele and Day edition was first published in two volumes: introduction, text, and glossary by Steele in 1941; notes, various addenda and errata by Steele and Day in 1946. In 1970 the two volumes were combined into one with a bibliographical supplement by Cecily Clark. Marjorie Daunt's work on rhymes was originally planned as part of the second volume, but it appeared in 1949 as a separate article. Unfortunately, in combining the two volumes, references to the page numbers of volume two were not adjusted. The notes occupy the first 41 pages; thereafter for pages 42–46 read 302–6, for 47 read 307, for 48 read 308.

of course takes advantage of the work of the *Middle English Dictionary* (up to S, fascicle 12).²

To avoid confusion, Charles's French lyrics are identified throughout by roman numerals; his English lyrics, by arabic, e.g., Ballade 9 (B 9) refers to his English poem; Ballade IX, to its French counterpart.

I have attempted, as far as possible, to provide useful and appropriate contexts for the consideration of many aspects of the work without engaging in the kind of romantic fantasy and amateur psychologizing that has characterized much of the work on the poetry of Charles of Orleans. On the other hand, there must inevitably be some conjecture on various matters concerning these poems, including the question of what contexts to place them in. I have attempted to err on the side of fullness, leaving it to the reader to discard material that seems irrelevant, rather than to present too few choices, which often has the effect of retarding further investigation.

Fortunes Stabilnes is a work in mixed forms; that is to say, it is a single work made up of ballades, roundels, and other lyrics, connected with passages of narrative verse, also in a variety of forms.³ The structure is unique in English (and probably in French as well) in that it is made up of about four times as much fixed-form as narrative verse, yet the narrative sections are themselves substantial—indeed essential to the work as a whole. One way to look at this collection is as an author-based collection of English lyrics presented within a frame. Another might be to read it as an English *dit amoureux*, a kind of catalogue of courtly motifs and rhetorical gambits in story form (the court of love, allegorical figures, the lady *sans mercy*, the debate of the lover with his heart, etc.); but it is much more than simply a pastiche of courtly ideas.⁴ The story of the English work is more complex than that of the

² For a more detailed discussion of the presentation of the text, see the final section of the introduction.

³ Roughly 1300 lines of narrative verse survive. The missing first quire probably contained about 394 lines of narrative verse (see below). The 121 ballades and 96 (extant) roundels contain 4817 lines. The work also contains nearly 400 lines of lyric verse in miscellaneous forms; Charles seems to have wanted to accord to every "document," every "letter," every "complaint" a different verse form. For a discussion of the function of the various forms, see my article, "Poetic Form as a Mirror of Meaning."

⁴ Such set pieces are typical of all French and English courtly verse, both narrative and lyric. R. H. Robbins rightly observed that both were composed "for intellectual and social diversion and amorous dalliance among a minuscule elite group" ("Structure," 245).

corresponding French work that Charles composed more or less simultaneously, and it is both longer and more coherent; the French work retains a more fragmentary character.⁵ The work is in a form well known in the late Middle Ages, a pseudo-autobiography involving the love life of a somewhat foolish narrator named for the poet (the narrator is repeatedly referred to by other characters as *Charlis* and *duk of Orliance*), who is largely unsuccessful and desperately unhappy with the life that his service to the God of Love and Venus (and by definition Fortune) brings him.

Argument of the Poem

The missing first quire of the English poems in Harley 682 (see below, "The Manuscripts") contained an allegorical narrative detailing the lover's first encounter with the God of Love and his court and his first sight of Beauty. The early ballades are among the closest "translations" of their French counterparts, and it is very likely that the opening narrative in the English work, too, closely resembled *La Retenue d'amours*, its French equivalent.⁶ Both were written very much under the influence of the opening scenes of the *Roman de la rose* and similar love allegories.

Early one Valentine's Day morning, Youth awakens the narrator and leads him reluctantly to meet the God of Love. Cupid turns him over to Pleasant Beauty, who sends an arrow through his eyes into his heart. He surrenders to her and asks for pity, at which point she teaches him the rules of love. When the lover swears to serve him loyally, the God of Love commands his secretary to write a letter patent, which is then delivered to the lover, though the God of Love retains the lover's heart. Here the opening allegory ends.⁷

⁵ I suspect that the English work only pretends to be ordered by form, on the model of many French and Italian author-compilations (see Huot, *From Song to Book*, 211ff.). Charles's French poems *do* constitute such a compilation (with a whiff of narrational sequence in the ballades), but the poet has turned the English poems into a much more coherent work which itself has many Continental models. That poets of the late Middle Ages were interested in being known for a body of work is obvious from Chaucer's *Retractions* (and from Gower's three major works, which support the head of his effigy in Southwark Cathedral), as well as from the many Continental examples. For more on the French work, see below, "Relation of English Poems to Their French Counterparts."

⁶ The standard edition of the French poetry is that edited by Pierre Champion in two volumes, entitled *Charles d'Orléans: Poésies*. All references to the French poems will be to this edition unless otherwise noted.

⁷ A more detailed summary of the opening allegory of the French work

The text of the letter patent, admitting the lover into the God of Love's service, follows (1–55). In a narrative section (202 lines) with which the English manuscript now opens, the lover thanks the God of Love but challenges him once again on the matter of withholding his heart from him (91–111). Love defends his arbitrariness and offers some final words of advice on how to gain the love of the lady (112–60). Looking once again at the lady (*Bewte*), the lover decides he dare not speak because Pity is asleep (161–74), and so takes up pen and paper (175–88), calls Hope to his side to help him (189–202), and begins the first sequence of ballades.

A series of seventy-four ballades follows (203–2539, including two five-stanza ballades, or chants royaux—Ballade 9 and Ballade 54). The majority are wooing letters from the lover to the lady. In the first, the lover addresses the lady straightforwardly and asks for her pity. Ballades 2–5 (231–349) concern the lady's eyes and the effects of her glances; in Ballades 6–8 (350–439), the dreamer has repeated problems—and discussions—with his heart. Then, in the first chant royal (Ballade 9, 440–90), the lover sums up the lady's charms. In Ballades 10–15 (491–673) the lady is apparently absent. Ballades 16–19 (674–89) deal with the lady's unkindness, and, after two more hopeful ballades (790–857), the lover returns to this theme with some regularity. The ballades from here on become more difficult to group. Daunger holds the heart hostage in Ballades 24, 25, 28, and 29. The heart is in serious distress of various kinds in Ballades 23, 26, and 27. Ballade 30 (1104–34) records an *allyaunce* between the lover and his lady, and thereafter there are references to a promise made, e.g., in Ballades 31–34 (1135–1249). The lady seems again to be absent in Ballades 33 and 36–40 (the lover talks with his heart again in Ballades 33 and 37). The woes that Fortune brings are the subject of Ballades 39–43 (1379–1547), but the lover challenges Daunger aggressively in Ballade 44 (1548–1600). In Ballade 46 (1629–57), the lover picks up an image introduced briefly in Ballade 22: the playing of a board game to determine the future of his love affair. In Ballade 47 (1659–88), one of the few truly joyful ballades, the lover says that the lady has declared her love for him (“Teys yow to whom y loue am and no moo”). This is followed by a Maying poem (Ballade 48), though not an altogether happy one, since he is separated from his lady (1689–1717). Ballades

precedes the text. The French original can be found in Champion, *Poésies*, 1–14. All references are to vol. 1 unless otherwise noted.

49–53 (1718–1872) deal with diverse subjects (53 is also a Maying poem). Ballade 54 (1873–1900), the second chant royal in the series,⁸ is addressed to the lover's absent lady, reminding her of his woe and his loyalty. In Ballade 55 (1928–59), however, the lover receives news of his lady's illness, and in Ballade 57 (1994–2025) she is dead. The remaining ballades in the sequence (58–74, lines 2026–2539), all mourning poems, are among the most eloquent lyrics of the entire work.

The bereaved lover falls asleep and dreams that Age⁹ appears at his bedside to counsel him to leave Love's service while he can (2540–2635). Age identifies himself as the one who escorted the dreamer from Childhood into Youth (2556–61). He says that Reason objects to the dreamer's continuing in this stage of life, in which he has been "gouernyd longe in nycete" (2562–67), and warns that Old Age (*Yelde*) is looking for the dreamer (2568–71). Age therefore counsels the dreamer to leave the service of Love, enemy of Old Age, since the dreamer has a handy excuse in his lady's death (2571–79). Nothing, he says, is more foolish than an old lover (2580–87). He tells the lover how to approach the God of Love (2588–2614) and warns him about Fortune (2615–35), who will bring him only pain. The dreamer awakes, considers the picture of the aging lover that Age has described, and decides to take the advice of that somber figure (2636–91). He decides to compose a petition for his release from service and the return of his heart (2692–2715); the petition follows (2716–2813). The lover presents his petition to Cupid and Venus at the parliament of Love (2814–16).¹⁰ Unable to convince him to take a new lady (2817–61), Cupid grants his request (2862–85), and his followers agree in confirming the lover's release (2886–2901). The lover receives his heart (2902–9) and sorrowfully takes his leave (2910–17). The God of Love assigns Comfort to accompany him to the Castle of No Care (2918–57), where he will live out the remainder of his life in the company of *Tyme Apast* (2958–73), presumably in peace and contentment. The next day, the former lover

⁸ I use the term "ballade" for the two chants royaux in order to retain Steele's numbering of the series as a whole.

⁹ Age is not Old Age; if he were, he would have no part to play in the opening allegory. He is age in the abstract—the messenger who transfers the narrator from one age bracket to another. Poirion defines *Aage* (in the French poems) as "durée de la vie" (*Le Lexique*, s.v. Aage). Goodrich translates *Aage*, "Years," (*Biography*, 218). He is "Aetas rather than Senectus, here" (Burrow, *Ages*, 183).

¹⁰ The action from the end of the Vision of Age to the petition to the God of Love is described in a series of seven "narrative ballades" (2814–2981), ballades without envoys which are not lyrical but simply further the "plot."

sends Comfort back to Love with a letter of thanks and an apology for his unseemly behavior at court, the result of his grief (2974–3045). He dates the letter “the thrittenthe day of Novembre” (3043) and signs it “the trewe Charlis, duk of Orlyauce / That sumtyme was oon of yowre pore servaunce” (3044–45).¹¹

Three ballades follow (82–84), the second of which announces a *Jewbile*, or celebration of the narrator’s retirement (3071–3109), and the third, a banquet (3110–37). The food will be the “swettist mete” not of “motoun, veel, or beef, / Nor pigge, nor goos” but of “birdis smale.” These tidbits are metaphors for roundels (3119–20), and indeed a series of about a hundred roundels follows (3138–4318). The roundels are a miscellaneous collection, many of them in no particular order (except perhaps the order of composition).¹² There are, however, a number of themes that run through the sequence. The series opens with one roundel (in the Troilus mold) expressing the speaker’s disdain of the lover’s life, followed immediately (3152–65) by a roundel on the compulsion of love and then a series on the perfections of the lady (Roundels 3–7, 3166–3235). From this point on, they are more readily analyzable by theme than by group:

- Eye imagery: 9, 10, 22, 51, 68, 91
- Woe: 15, 19, 23, 32, 62, 92, and elsewhere
- Plea for mercy: 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 21, 64, 89, 90
- The heart: 24, 26, 36, 68, 71, 87, 88, 93
- Praise of the lady: 59, 63, 69, and elsewhere
- Kissing poems: 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 47, 48, 57
- Absence of or from the lady: 38, 40, 42, 50, 52, 67
- Death of the lady: 65, 94, 101

In addition, Roundel 11 is addressed to the month of May (3283–95); Roundels 18, 45, and 54 involve the kind of imagery or allegory found in Ballade 50; Roundel 60 is a farewell poem. The last roundel (4305–18) returns to the idea of a banquet, governed by the image of the customary drinking of a cup of wine at the end of a meal. This is followed by a poem in rhyme royal on “saying grace” after the meal (4319–88), followed by the washing of hands (with a play on wash/

¹¹ The corresponding French poem is dated 13 November 1437.

¹² In my article “Structure of the English Poems,” I have not argued, as Sarah Spence claims, that the roundels “describe two love affairs of which the second is less courtly than the first”; the two love affairs are embodied in the two ballade sequences (“French *Chansons*,” 284n).

wish—4389–4479) and an invitation to dance after the serving of “spise and wyne” (4480–83). “My Iewbile then is to yow doon, / And so my newe fortune wol folow soon,” says the narrative (4485–86). After an additional half-dozen miscellaneous lyrics that represent the after-dinner dances (4487–4637), the second dream vision follows (4638–5189).

As the narrative opens, the ex-lover has been asked by an acquaintance who is not himself a poet to compose a roundel or ballade on the theme of “fortunes stabilnes” (4638–63). Taking pen and ink to a cliff overlooking the sea (4664–79), the narrator-poet obliges with a double ballade on that subject (4680–4735). This is heavy work for a retiree, and he falls asleep immediately upon finishing it (4736–38). In the vision that follows, Venus comes floating over the sea, naked save for a “kercher of plesaunce” about her middle, with an owl on her hand (4757–67). In the comic encounter that follows, the narrator establishes with some difficulty who she is (4771–4800), then recounts his sorrowful life (4801–64). But he elicits no sympathy for his grief from Venus, who counsels him unequivocally to choose a new lady (4865–82); this he resists (4883–4963). Looking up by chance, he sees over Venus’s shoulder a golden chariot in which sits a richly-dressed queen holding a wheel (4964–73), which is described in great detail (4974–5049). At the top of the wheel he sees a beauty whom he mistakes for his dead lady (5050–57). Unaware of what the dreamer has seen, Venus assumes that he is having some sort of vision or fit (5058–74) until she turns around (5079–99). Venus identifies the queen as Fortune (5100–5105). She assures him that it is not his lady sitting on Fortune’s wheel (5106–12), but nonetheless offers the lady to him. After some agonizing, he leaves the decision to her (5114–62), whereupon she immediately offers to take him up to the top of Fortune’s wheel to join the lady (5163–71). Dangling from her “kercher of plesaunce,” he rises so high that he takes fright, and crying, “O lady Venus, mercy!” he awakens himself (5184–89), but finds that he still grasps “a gret pese of plesaunce” (5190–91).

Getting to his feet, he wanders into a wood (5194–97), where he comes upon a company of lords and ladies playing the game of Post and Pillar (5198–5206). Among them he sees the lady of the vision (5207–9). An old acquaintance presses him to join the game in his place, as he has torn his hose and must retire (5219–22). The narrator joins in and heads straight for the lady (5233–41), to whom he confesses his love and tremblingly requests—and receives—permission to write (5242–5317). As evening approaches, he takes his leave of the company and of his new love (5324–44).

A second sequence of thirty-six ballades follows (5352–6531), divided into three parts by the insertion of two epistles (5688–5783 and 6129–70). The new love seems considerably less sympathetic than was his first lady (see Ballade 103–6 and 108). The attitude of the lover is less courtly, and his fuse, shorter. After two fairly predictable lyrics (Ballade 85–86, cp. Ballade 1), the lover begins to complain of his treatment at his new lady's hands: "how long wil ye straunge in þis wise?" (Ballade 87); "The chaunge of yowre mystrust kan y not see" (Ballade 88); "giltles sleth me yowre disdayne" (Ballade 89); "yow y fynde more hard than eny ston" (Ballade 90); the lady has a hard heart (Ballade 91); "complayntoure causeles am not y" (Ballade 92); he complains of "this long dilay" (Ballade 93), and begs the lady to "haue me not in disdayne" (Ballade 94); he is "oppressid with thought, langoure, & hevynes" (Ballade 95); and finally, "we nedis must depart" (Ballade 96). This ballade, in which he begs the lady to exchange hearts before they are separated, is followed by a letter in twelve stanzas describing the lover's pain at their parting and begging her to think of him (5688–5783).

The ballade that follows (Ballade 97, 5784–5811) is a complaint, in which the lover compares himself to an anchorite and finds the hermit happier than he. The intricate patterning of Ballade 98 (5812–39) is unusual, as is the joy expressed in it (this patterning is picked up again in Ballade 100). Woe returns in Ballade 99, and, in spite of the lover's bravado, he is reduced again in Ballades 102–6 to lamenting the lady's cruelty (5924–6063). In Ballade 107 the lover announces to his heart that it is to be exchanged for the lady's (6064–6100), but the exchange apparently does not take place, for in the following ballade (108) the lover petulantly takes his leave of Love (6101–28). This is followed by a second letter, in six stanzas, in which the lover, abasing himself, apologizes to the lady for his rash behavior (6129–70).

The third sub-section of this ballade sequence opens (Ballade 109) with a reference to a promise (unspecified) made by the lady (6171–98), followed by another apology (Ballade 110, 6199–6226). The next four ballades (Ballade 111–14, 6227–54), as well as Ballade 117, are positive declarations of the narrator's love. Ballade 115 involves the *strif* between the lady's heart and eye (6342–66). Ballade 116 is a dialogue between lover and lady that turns on word-play involving the word *ocupy* (6367–94). In Ballade 118, the lover defies Fortune (6420–47), but in the following ballade (119), the lady is clearly leading the lover down the proverbial garden path (6448–75), and in Ballade 120 the lover is again complaining of her unkindness (6476–6503). The

work ends inconclusively; though the final ballade (121) opens, "As for farewel, farewel, farewel, farewel" (6504), the lover speaks of seeing the lady again (6516), and it is unclear what the poet's intentions were for ending the work, if indeed he intended to add anything more.¹³

Title of the Poem

An editor rarely has the opportunity to suggest a name for a nameless medieval poem. *The English Poems of Charles of Orleans* (the title used by Steele and Day) is unwieldy and inaccurate, and no other purely descriptive title has presented itself. The work is primarily concerned with the lover's unsuccessful attempts to woo two ladies, the first of whom he loses to death, and the second, to the lady's *daunger*. It is Fortune who takes away the narrator's first lady in Ballade 61 (2116), and it is Fortune who presents him with the second (5049–54). In a series of ballades on the subject of Fortune in the first sequence, Fortune is represented in unequivocally negative terms. "Dost thou my deth conspyre?" the lover asks in Ballade 40. In Ballade 41 he hopes that Fortune will set him at the top of her wheel, but in Ballade 42 the assaults of Fortune ("which is of care princesse") exhaust him. What is more, Fortune is "gery" (966), "false" and "fulle of gret dispite" (1513), "seytfulle" (2129), "cursid" (2739), "crewel," and "ful of disseyvaunce," (4279); she is full of "dissayt and skorne" (6420), "fraude" (6421), and "mokkery" (6429). She "pleyeth the tyran" (1398) with the lover, but he hopes to "don hir discomfiture" (1402).

¹³ Fols. 148 and 149 are ruled but contain no text. Steele divides the work (in his table of contents) into three parts, with the first part divided into "Love's Service" (my I plus A plus the first part of II, for which see my Table of Contents) and "Love's Service Relinquished" (the remainder of II). His second part is equivalent to B, and his third to III plus C. Though the corresponding parts of the work (especially the ballade sequences) are unequal in length, my division into six parts illustrates more clearly the structure of the whole, in that the introduction is substantial and the two dream visions separate the three sequences. Each of the narrative sections introduces a series of lyrics and involves an encounter between the narrator and an important figure or figures (first the God of Love, then Age, then Venus and Fortune).

I. about 596 lines (including the missing first quire)

A. 2336 lines

II. 530 lines

B. 1678 lines (including the missing quire of roundels)

III. 713 lines

C. 1179 lines

(The missing quire of roundels increases B by about 112 lines.)

Although *fortune* is used to indicate mere chance in Ballades 65 and 66 (on the choosing of the flower or the leaf), it is much more often used to indicate a malicious force that thwarts the lover's desires. This view of Fortune even crowds out her double nature, which is referred to only a few times (e.g., 1343, 2129, 6177). In the early, primarily theological, tradition, those who see Fortune as either solely good or solely evil are said to be deceived about the true nature of things (see Boethius 2.pr.1); Charles intended his readers to see his narrator-lover as (self-)deceived in exactly this way.

The idea of the unwavering animosity of Fortune is introduced early in the work, when Age cautions the bereaved lover in a dream not to trust her (2615 ff.). The old man gives the dreamer sound advice that includes a warning not to trust "Fortune, with hir chere covert, / Which wolle flatir to brynge thee fresshe in smert, / Saiyng she hath the sokoure to be lent" (2615-17), and who will tell him that his lady did not really die, thereby luring him back into an unfulfilled love affair. "Ware lest she eft brynge thee not in pyne," Age warns (2623). Near the end of the work, Fortune, full of "dissayt," "skorne," and "fraude," is still the enemy, and the narrator is still begging her to turn her wheel for him (6421).

The author himself employs the phrase "Fortunes stabilnes" in regard to a ballade (or rather a double ballade) the ex-lover—retired from Love's service because of the death of his lady—intends to compose for *another* unsuccessful lover (4680-4735). The phrase is thus used at a crucial point in the work, when the lover has retired from the service of Love and the poem should logically be drawing to its conclusion. In his poem, the narrator "biwayles" the stableness of Fortune, who does not operate in the way that many suppose, now hurting, now amending (4689); on the contrary, "sympille wights" like himself receive only adversity at her hand. The lyric ends with the paradoxical request that she turn her wheel (and she only appears to do so in the scenes that follow). It is his writing of a ballade on this subject that induces sleep and prompts the arrival of Venus. The goddess will eventually attempt to take him directly to the top of Fortune's wheel—a position he never does attain (or, if at all, only briefly), judging from the course of the love affair that follows.

The phrase suggests an image unique in the vast medieval lore concerning Fortune—a fortune which is, for this lover, not ever-changing, but stable.¹⁴ It occasions the only properly imbedded lyric in the

¹⁴ Her stableness is, of course, an illusion. Though found here perhaps

work, a poem whose impending composition is announced and whose composition in turn triggers the dream vision of Venus and Fortune. The figure of Fortune is described in extraordinary detail, but it is immediately evident that the essence of the figure is not her dual nature (see below, "Literary Considerations: Fortune"). Contrary to all other references to her nature in the work, in his dream, the narrator sees an almost entirely positive Fortune, as if she were purely a product of the dreamer's wish fulfillment and therefore the opposite of the negative Fortune he knows in his waking life.

Fortune is thus represented throughout the work as a force to be reckoned with—and not a force for good. Fortune thwarts the lover in his first love affair by causing the death of the lady; she thwarts his second affair by offering a beautiful lady who turns out to be unkind. The phrase "Fortunes stabilnes" sums up the sad frustration of the central figure, the lover who cannot find any degree of contentment in his service to the God of Love because Fortune steadfastly refuses to allow him his turn at the top of her wheel.¹⁵ For all these reasons, *Fortunes Stabilnes* would seem an appropriate name for the work referred to heretofore by the title *The English Poems of Charles of Orleans*.¹⁶

uniquely in the Middle Ages, the idea of a stable Fortune was known in antiquity, and, in the words of F. P. Pickering, "dug up" in the Renaissance (212 and passim).

¹⁵ Cecily Clark has pointed out an instance of the same idea in the French Rondeau CCXIII ("Some English Perspectives," 258), which plays on the proverb, "la roue de la fortune n'est pas toujours une" (Le Roux de Lincy, 2.327). Another instance of the idea occurs in Ballade XCVIII, in which the waters of Fortune are too calm for the boat of the lover to make any headway.

¹⁶ It has been suggested to me that this work is a sort of encyclopedia or *summa* of love poetry, in the manner of Machaut's *Voir-dit* and *Remede* or Grandson's *Livre Messire Ote*, Fortune being simply one important theme. Seen in this way, my choice of title does indeed skew the work. If these poems form a coherent story, however (*romanesque*, to use Poirion's damning word), as I believe they do, then the *central* theme of the work is *infortune*.

My reference in the subtitle to Charles's Book of Love is intended to emphasize my sense of the coherence of the work and to avoid the term "the English poems," since the English poems found in Appendix I, almost certainly from Charles's pen, are not part of it. What it should not be taken to imply is that this is a completely polished work, sent, perhaps by the author himself, out into the world in its final form. For a timely caution against such an assumption, see Pearsall, "Crux."

Prince and Poet

Biographical Sketch

Named for his uncle Charles VI, Charles of Orleans (b. 1394) was a prince of the house of Valois, son of Louis of Orleans and Valentina Visconti of Milan (cousin-german to Louis, thus herself half French). As a member of the royal house of France, as a vitally important pawn in the Hundred Years War as it was played out by the various French and English factions, each of whom seemed to vie with the other for distinction in greed, bad judgment, and vindictiveness, and as an important poet of the French Middle Ages, Charles of Orleans has been written about and analyzed from many points of view in order to support many kinds of arguments.¹⁷ I shall provide only a few facts, together with a chronology of the events of his life; I have provided the fullest detail for the period during which Charles was a prisoner in England.¹⁸

Charles's childhood was one of extreme wealth and culture.¹⁹

¹⁷ For a concise biography, see Fox, *Lyric Poetry*, 1-31, or Purcell, 1-19.

¹⁸ The most complete and reliable biography of Charles's life is Pierre Champion's, *Vie de Charles d'Orléans (1394-1465)*. I have leaned most heavily on Champion's work, both his life of the duke and his other valuable publications, with occasional recourse to the work of Enid McLeod, who has treated much of the same material in English (with much unfounded supposition about the poetry). Another biography, by Norma Lorre Goodrich (filled with romantic fancy, and apparently published in a very limited edition), is difficult to find. Many hundreds of documents in libraries on both sides of the Channel (especially in London and Paris) have provided the material for each of them. In addition Charles figures in many of the histories (political, martial, and social) of the France and England of the late Middle Ages.

Hella S. Haasse wrote a novel in Dutch based on the life of the duke. The first of her many novels, it proved so popular that it has never gone out of print in Holland since its first publication in 1949. The recently published English version is titled, not *The Forest of Long Awaiting* ("La forest de Longue Actente," a phrase taken from the famous opening of Ballade CV, which has no English counterpart), but *In a Dark Wood Wandering*, in order to call forth Dantean associations.

¹⁹ For a succinct account of the fabulous luxury into which Charles was born, including a detailed description of the Hôtel St.-Pol (the "townhouse" on the Seine where Charles was born), a description of Valentina's progress through France to marry Louis, and many other fascinating details, see Graves, 1-57. Laborde's documentary account of the dukes of Orleans, of which Charles and his father, Louis, take up three-quarters, names, among others, 60 *different* doctors and surgeons; 39 painters and illuminators; 8 stained glass artists; 16 scribes; 17 sculptors and stonemasons; 60 architects, masters of the works, and master masons; 113 goldsmiths, enamellers, and engravers; 20 booksellers and binders;

Surrounded by fabulous luxury, he was exposed to learning and learned people from an early age.²⁰ His mother was not only intelligent and lettered,²¹ but attentive to and supportive of her children (including Louis's son by Mariette d'Enghien, the wife of one of his officers).²² Charles spent his early years at a number of Valois castles in the Loire region, where he and his brothers were tutored in Latin by Nicole Garbet, bachelor of theology and secretary to Louis. Louis, though more distant than Valentina, provided his sons with a model of princely ambition, charm, largesse, and cunning. Charles's early life was thus in some ways a "good preparation" for his future captivity in England: a life lived away from the seat of power, in semi-retirement with his mother and siblings, a life *monotone*, in the word of Champion.²³

Charles was both orphaned and widowed before his fifteenth birthday: his father was assassinated by the Burgundian faction; his mother died, probably of grief; his wife died in childbirth. It was not unusual for the children of royal households to miss out on what we now call childhood, but Charles's early years, though lapped in wealth, seem in many ways to have been especially hard. In 1415, at the age of twenty-one, he was captured at the battle of Agincourt. Perhaps he was one of the lucky ones—much of the flower of French chivalry died that day—but Charles himself never felt his fate was in any way fortunate. Pulled from under a heap of bodies on the battlefield, he was taken, together with other noble prisoners, to England, a land he had never seen, but

98 minstrels, musicians, and clowns; 19 choristers; 16 embroiderers; and 26 fools and dwarves.

²⁰ In 1401 Charles's mother gave him and his brother Philip books illuminated with gold, azure, and vermilion and covered with Cordovan leather; they were seven and four and a half years old, respectively (Laborde, no. 5941). For more detail on Charles's early education, see Champion, *Vie*, 19–22; McLeod, 21–22.

²¹ She played the harp, owned a number of books, played at tables, and was very fond of equestrian activities (Laborde, nos. 5813, 6432, 5773, 5865, 5925; for a list of her books, see Champion, *La Librairie*, xvi–xvii). She also owned a silver astrolabe (Graves, no. 387, 103). "Valentine est destinée au siècle d'or: chez elle, cette curiosité intellectuelle du XIVE siècle semble se résoudre en une fine compréhension et en un entendement critique. Elle est douée de la forte intelligence et de l'esprit souple de sa race; et elle est très belle femme" (Graves, 19).

²² Champion, *Vie*, 23. I have no idea where N. L. Goodrich got the idea that Valentina "repudiated her son Charles on her deathbed" (*Themes*, 188).

²³ "Prince des lis," 8. His comparatively frequent references to childhood in his poetry (both French and English), a subject that does not spring immediately to mind in relation to love poetry in the courtly mold, may be due to his vivid memories of these years and their stark contrast to what befell him thereafter (see the introductory French allegory, the first dream vision, Roundel 65, etc.).

to which he had already consigned his younger brother, Jean of Angoulême, at the age of twelve, as a hostage. Charles spent twenty-five years in captivity, shuttled from one English castle to another.

At the approach of his release in 1440, it was clear that not only the French but also many of the English felt that a horrible injustice had been done to the duke of Orleans. To hold a nobleman captive for decades, to prevent him from effectively administering his lands and exercising the social, legal, and governmental duties of his own culture, bordered on the inhuman. Charles himself spoke in retrospect of his feelings of despair and his desire for death while in captivity.²⁴ It is no surprise that when he shook the English dust from his feet he cut off all but a very few contacts with the land of his captivity. In spite of talk in the earlier poetry of his narrator's retirement to the Castle of No Care, Charles did not withdraw from the world around him on his return to France. He campaigned in Italy, rebuilt his domains, had a family, and, above all, wrote and shared poetry with a wide circle of friends and acquaintances.²⁵

While in England, Charles had "missed" many of the momentous events of fifteenth-century French history: the death of Charles VI and the accession of Charles VII, the repeated devastation of the north of France by English armies, the siege of Rouen, the murder of John the Fearless (the murderer of Louis of Orleans, Charles's father), the defense of his own lands by his bastard brother, the heroic count of Dunois, and the entire career of his great champion, Joan of Arc. He had been excluded from much of the peace process between France and England that he longed so deeply to hasten and nurture. He had not as yet met Philip of Burgundy (son of and successor to his father's murderer, but a future friend and ally) and Burgundy's gracious but shrewd wife, Isabelle.

Life sometimes seems to imitate art. Just as Charles's narrator retired from love, at the urging of Age, after the death of his lady, but was later persuaded to take a new lady, so Charles himself mourned the death of his second wife, Bonne, while captive in England but lived to take a new young wife only weeks after his release from English captivity. They lived together for thirty years, apparently happily;²⁶ in the

²⁴ For his own record of his despair, see Champion, "Prince des Lis," 19, and *Vie*, 547.

²⁵ Even a cursory look at the "Itinéraire" at the end of Champion's account of Charles's life makes this abundantly clear. See also, e.g., McLeod, 326-30.

²⁶ It is worth mentioning that Marie took an active part in the literary life of

last eight years of their marriage Charles fathered three children, one of them the future Louis XII. During his long years in England Charles became *anglicisé*, according to Champion; he certainly became fluent in the language of his captors.²⁷

Charles's captivity in England is hardly to be equated with imprisonment, even though his movements were limited and his activities observed to some degree.²⁸ A never-ending stream of goods and servants moved to and fro between the duke and his home, at least in the early years. The captured "property" of Henry V, Charles was a royal "guest" in the households of a number of English noblemen.²⁹ To be sure, some of his accommodations were more congenial than others, and the ever-present need to raise ransom money for both

the court at Blois. She wrote poetry and collected books. The inventory of her library made in 1487 reveals a select but impressive collection, made no doubt with encouragement from her bibliophile husband (see Champion, *La Librairie*, 115–16), and his "Liber Amicorum." "Charles d'Orléans presided over a brilliant and flourishing *Puy* or Court of Love at Blois after his return from exile: the ancient traditions of poetic debate were fostered there, above all in the ballade and rondeau forms. At banquets minstrels sang, mystery plays were performed, and there was juggling and tableaux-vivants" (Wilkins, *One Hundred Ballades*, 141 n. 92).

²⁷ "Prince des lis," 20. Edward Halle (from whom Holinshed derived much of his information) wrote in 1548:

—Imagin you that a prince of a bloud royal, brought into thraldome, restrained from liberty and liuyng farre from kyn and father, & farther from frendes, would not geue his diligent care to that mocion, by the whiche he might be restored, bothe to his auncient preheminece, possession and signiory? Yes, yes, you maie be sure, he neither consulted on the matter, nor deferred the aunswere, but therunto gently agreed. What should I saie more? As some writers affirme, foure hundred thousande Crounes were paid for his deliuerance, although other saie, but thre hundred thousande: and so he was deliuered out of Fraunce at that tyme, bothe speakyng better Englishe then Frenche, and also swearyng, neuer to beare Armure against the Kyng of Englande. (fols. 139v–140r)

²⁸ Champion (*Vie*) provides a great deal of information on this point, as does (perhaps not always so reliably) McLeod. See, e.g., Champion, chap. 8: "La 'Prison' Anglaise." A fellow prisoner, the duke of Bourbon, sent to France for four of his falconers, implying that he was permitted to ride and hunt during his captivity (McLeod, 134).

²⁹ He would hardly have ordered six hundred pipes of wine to be sent to him from France if he were not entertaining as well as being entertained by his hosts (Rymer, 10.263–65). Although Enid McLeod, in her biography of the duke, would have us believe that his need to administer his lands and raise the ransom for both himself and his brother Jean all but drove Charles into poverty, "poverty" in this context is a decidedly relative term.

himself and his brother must have caused him many sleepless nights even in the most pleasant of accommodations.³⁰ He could never forget for a moment that he was in the hands of his enemies. Nevertheless, in the course of his long captivity he certainly enjoyed many civilized and peaceful days: while at Pontefract he went on outings to the country with his "host," Robert Waterton, and his family;³¹ the earl of Suffolk, Charles's "host" at Wingfield, was fond of evenings of musical and literary entertainment; some of Charles's English rounds show clear evidence of having been offered to one or another lady, probably as a compliment in some social setting or other; and Charles took part in lavish entertainments in London on a number of occasions, including the visit of Sigismund, king of the Romans, in 1416.³²

One of Charles's guardians stands out from the others as important to his life and work. William de la Pole, earl (later duke) of Suffolk, with whom Charles lodged from 1432 to 1436, played a special role in Charles's captivity. Suffolk's life and political career are well documented. He was near Charles's age and newly married when he requested the custody of the French prisoner in 1432, and the two apparently became friends. He was by all accounts a francophile, sympathetic to the French cause, or, to put it in a more neutral fashion, very interested in making peace between the English and the French. Charles travelled with him to Oxfordshire, where he spent time in and around Ewelme, which came to the earl from the Chaucer family.³³ Charles's bastard brother Jean, count of Dunois had made Suffolk's acquaintance after the battle of Jargeau, when Suffolk and his brother John were the

³⁰ Any reading of Charles's life will give the lie to the romantic idea that he was passed from "guardian to guardian, one more solicitous of his welfare than the next" (Spence, *French Chansons*, xiv).

³¹ See Champion, *Vie*, 171-72, and Fox, *Lyric Poetry*, 10-12. Waterton is hardly to be numbered among the "servants and ruffians" with whom Goodrich associates him, nor is there evidence that Charles was held "in an almost solitary confinement" (*Themes*, 46). On the contrary, the duke had horses brought from France, presumably so that he could join the chase, as well as travel with his "hosts" when necessary. Waterton, the constable of Pontefract, had his own estate, Methley Hall, six miles away, where Charles was a frequent visitor (see Ellis, 2, where Methley Hall is referred to in a letter from Henry V as "Robertis place"; see also H. A. Hall). The parish church at Methley, where Charles would have worshipped, is still standing, and contains a chapel with fine tomb effigies of Waterton and his wife.

³² See Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, 287. On the possible social context for Charles's verse, see Strohm, esp. 18-19.

³³ See below, "Chronology," and McLeod, 187.

count's prisoner (see below, "Chronology"); Suffolk was thus acquainted both with Charles's condition as prisoner and with his family and home. Dunois had earned the earl's friendship by releasing his brother. The friendship between the the earl and the duke lasted beyond 1440 when Charles returned to France, for Suffolk visited Charles at Blois.³⁴

What kind of man was Charles of Valois, duke of Orleans? Though he was highly thought of in his own time (both as a man and as a poet),³⁵ scholars who write literary history, after ignoring him for centuries, have often been less than kind to the duke. He has been seen as refined but ineffectual, weak-willed and self-centered. His reputation among English readers and even some French scholars was tainted (this is no overstatement) by Robert Louis Stevenson's condescending essay on his life and works.³⁶ Unfortunately the editor of Charles's French poetry and a voluminous writer on both his life and work, Pierre Champion, took his cue from Stevenson.³⁷ He read the duke's poetry as a biography *sentimentale* and viewed the poet as a kind of Hamlet. He deeply resents the fact that the duke never mentions his champion, Joan of Arc, saying "dépit d'un talent charmant et de la bonté reconnue par tous chez l'homme, est vraiment une tare d'une incroyable laideur."³⁸ His poetry, too, in an age which cannot easily appreciate obsolete fixed forms, has seemed to some artificial, superficial, and divorced from the realities of life.³⁹

³⁴ The long duration of this apparently quite genuine friendship argues against the insinuation of a number of critics that Charles was involved in some sort of affair with the duchess of Suffolk (for which there is not a shred of evidence).

³⁵ Even Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, his greatest and most vocal enemy, never once underestimated his intellect or his cunning. The chronicler Olivier de la Marche, in referring to a journey to Burgundy with the duke in 1447, termed Charles a *moult bon rhétoricien* (see Champion, *Vie*, 361). On his reputation as a poet, see Champion, "Du Succès."

³⁶ "For one who was no great politician, nor (as men go) especially, wise, capable or virtuous . . .," he begins (164); "his birth—if we are to argue from a man's parents—was above his merit," he continues (165); and so on (164–201). This essay follows a highly opinionated biographical sketch and literary appreciation of François Villon ("His eyes were indeed sealed with his own filth"), during which he nevertheless concludes that Villon is "the one great writer of his age and country" (158–59). Late in Charles's life, Villon was a guest at Blois, where he composed a poem on the birth of Charles's daughter Marie (see Frank).

³⁷ He speaks with approval of Stevenson's essay repeatedly in "Prince des lis." Goodrich summarizes the published attitudes of a number of scholars toward Charles as a man and as a poet (*Themes*, 14–24).

³⁸ Champion, "Prince de lis," 4–6.

³⁹ "Charles d'Orléans n'est poète ni par la passion, ni même par l'imagina-

It would be possible to counter these negative judgments with positive ones based on historical materials, but a few facts will suffice here. We know, for instance, that Charles was an able administrator and a good politician who worked tirelessly from prison to free his brother, govern his lands, and protect his property, that he was a loyal friend, that he worked for peace between France and England, that he suffered much sorrow in his life (not least because of his long imprisonment), and that he was devout. Charles of Orleans was not a passive prisoner. In comparison with the library of his contemporary, Philip the Good of Burgundy, Charles's books reveal a serious, reflective turn of mind, one more interested in philosophy, science, and theology than in chronicle and romance.⁴⁰ The two works he wrote in Latin demonstrate his seriousness as well as his genuine interest in religion.⁴¹ In addition, we know from his life history that he was well-read in philosophy, medicine, theology, literature (including the classics), and many other subjects,⁴² that he had an interest in clocks and other mechanical devices,⁴³ and that he was a musician. It is evident from his writings as well as his diplomacy that he was always able to see more than one side of a situation and to act as reality dictated when idealism was impracticable.

These facts of Charles's life are not irrelevant to an understanding of him as a poet. They should, at the very least, help in dissociating the

tion" (Mornet, 23). "In spite of an occasional sentiment or graceful phrase . . . , the [English] poems tend to become tiresome in their repetition of a few stock themes. . . . Such poetry is something of an anachronism in the second quarter of the fifteenth century" (Baugh, 294). See also Fox, *Lyric Poetry*, 126.

⁴⁰ Doutrepoint, *Inventaire*. This inventory is admittedly early; for Richard Vaughan's description and estimate of Philip's library, see his *Philip the Good*, 156–58, and his *Valois Burgundy*, 171–73. On the library of Charles's brother Jean, see Crow, 92–93.

⁴¹ Because his library was established by his father and contained many books acquired from his parents, it is useful to consult the much smaller list of books that he brought back to France from England in 1440. This collection of nearly seventy books contains many religious and moral works in addition to works on government, medicine, geometry, and philosophy (Champion, *La Librairie*, xxv–xxix). According to Gilbert Ouy, Thomas Wynchelsey, Master of Theology (d. 1437), who founded the library at Greyfriars, London (and was, perhaps, *le directeur de conscience du prisonnier*), dedicated his *Instructorium providi peregrini* to the duke ("Un poème mystique," 64–69).

⁴² Jacques Charpier suggests that if he had lived a century later he would have been a humanist, but "il est pour son temps un 'intellectuel' aussi complet qu'on pouvait l'être" (64).

⁴³ Champion, *Vie*, 654.

poet from his persona, the foolish and ineffectual but devoted lover. Charles did not spend his years in England either mooning over English ladies or idly "wasting his time" writing love lyrics in an attitude of "No Care." His reputation in his own lifetime as "le plus grand des amoureux" was based, not on notorious sexual exploits, nor yet on a state of continuous love-longing, but on his poetry and speech as a highly refined form of *luf-talking*, a discourse that displayed at once his nobility and refinement, his skill as a poet, and his ability to turn the stuff of everyday life into elegant verse.⁴⁴

There was some interplay between life and art in the case of this work, as there is in most if not all works of art, but speculation as to which poem refers to which lady (wife or mistress) and at what period of time remains just that.⁴⁵ It is not simply the conventionality of this poetry, however, that militates against the presentation of the narrator's *histoire* as autobiography:

One can only wonder at the strength of a poetic tradition which made this prince of the royal blood bewail twenty-five years of captivity in a foreign land almost solely in terms of separation from his mistress, and in a manner so veiled and indirect that it is not even known for certain whether or not the lady in question was an imaginary figure [i.e., France itself], his first wife, Isabelle . . . , his second wife, Bonne . . . , an acquaintance in England, or sometimes the one, sometimes the other, or even an amalgam of all four!⁴⁶

⁴⁴ See Foulet, 378, Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, and Stevens.

⁴⁵ See, for instance, Goodrich's summary of hypotheses and statement of her own (*Themes*, chap. 4 and passim), and Champion, "A propos." Many scholars have fortunately refused to speculate on the "real" identities of the ladies of Charles's poetic world, but a number of scholars have given rein to their imaginations in providing Charles with feminine companionship during his years in England. Ethel Seaton's discovery of anagrammatical evidence for Charles's romantic encounters and other friendships has been generally dismissed by scholars (*Studies in Villon*, esp. "Charles d'Orléans and Two English Ladies," 20-35; "Charles d'Orléans and Some French Ladies," 36-44). Besides Anne Molins (who appears anagrammatically in one of the English poems in Charles's "autograph" manuscript), scholars have named the duchess of Suffolk or the wife of Robert Waterton (Champion, *Vie*), and even (in a coy sort of way) the duchess of Burgundy (Isabelle; see van Altena, 81)—in short, any woman known to have come into contact with the duke between 1415 and 1440. Would that such scholarly energy had been put toward investigating the duke's poetry.

⁴⁶ Fox, *Lyric Poetry*, x; see also 152-56.

As Burrow has convincingly argued, life may imitate art; the traditional and conventional may as likely be real as fictional.⁴⁷ It will not do to deny the "truth" of a narrative or lyric because it does not seem sincere, nor will it do affirm its facticity because it does seem so.⁴⁸

These [French] ballades should be taken as they stand. . . . They are essentially literary in nature. . . . That they are altogether devoid of autobiographical elements is, indeed, unlikely, but the evidence the texts supply is scant and does not enable us to reach beyond surmise. That they have kept their secrets over the centuries is, in a way, a measure of their success, for had he so desired, Charles could easily have been more specific.⁴⁹

Fox might equally well have been speaking of the English poems. Premature efforts to read the facts and feelings of the duke's captivity out of his poetry, far from giving us a deeper understanding of his work, have simply thrown up pseudo-factual barriers to a real understanding of what he wrote, when he wrote it, and why he wrote it.

Charles crafted poetry as an ivory carver crafts a diptych: perhaps a believer in the religious scene he is carving, perhaps not, the craftsman is thoroughly at home with the vocabulary of his art and devoted to composing and executing an object which is beautiful, intellectually interesting, and sometimes affecting. Charles took his poetry very seriously as a craft and at the same time valued it lightly as only one (self-imposed) task among a hundred others. This also disqualifies him as a writer of straightforward autobiography. Champion saw this when he said of the duke, "Voilà le tour d'esprit du maître, à la fois réel et faux"⁵⁰ and "C'est là une des principales difficultés que nous rencontrons pour entendre une oeuvre aussi sincère qu'artificielle, aussi artificielle que sincère."⁵¹

Charles's was both a serious and a playful mind, and he had a sense of humor to match his wit. He loved subtle and complex ideas, techniques, and images. His utterly remarkable lack of self-importance led him to indulge in self-mockery and to play elaborate games with art

⁴⁷ "Autobiographical Poetry." Much has been written on autobiography and pseudo-autobiography in medieval literature. See, e.g., Gybbon-Monypenny, Zumthor, and the references in Burrow's article.

⁴⁸ See Goodrich, *Themes*, 112-13.

⁴⁹ Fox, *Lyric Poetry*, 156.

⁵⁰ *Viè*, 647.

⁵¹ "Prince des Lis," 44.

and reality.⁵² All of these traits and tendencies manifest themselves in his love poetry. Poetry, for Charles, was a kind of play, but it was also a serious pursuit, both technically and aesthetically. His primary subject was love—love, that is, of the highly-wrought, artificial, rule-bound sort popular in the poetry (and in the courtly mythology) of his age. This love was his training ground for learning his craft, but his purview broadened over the years to include subjects of all sorts—and, more importantly in regard to his English poems, to include attitudes of all sorts toward that love which had been his first theme. He began writing poetry before his capture by the English, and he was still composing poetry when he died at seventy. That many attitudes toward love would emerge in the course of such a long career is hardly surprising. It is often difficult to discern in his love poetry the degree to which he is being genuinely serious or genuinely playful, or whether in fact he is being both at one and the same time. The latter seems often the case.

It is more useful in the context of this edition to consider the kind of poet Charles is. It is possible to state some indisputable facts about him as a poet (in both French and English): he is extremely fond of word play and word patterning and acutely aware of the language he uses; he is deeply responsive to the cadence of language (Charprier speaks more than once of his “musicalité”).⁵³ He is daring in his use of imagery and in his use of different registers. He is fond of proverbs and sententious sayings, of the paraphernalia of courtly verse, and of fixed forms. He is more interested in “micropoetics” than “macro-poetics” (and though he often revises his work in both French and English, he does not do so meticulously). Anything but sentimental or romantic, he is a master of wit; his sense of humor is frequently in evidence, especially in his later poetry (and it sometimes borders on the risqué). He is as *avant-garde* in his imagery and use of language as he

⁵² He wrote pseudo-autobiography on the one hand, and on the other displayed his poetry in public. One of the most charming details about his early life—a period when very few charming things befell him—concerns his attitude toward poetry. In 1414 he paid “276 liv. 7 s. 6 den. tour.” for 960 pearls to be used to embroider on the sleeves of a *robe* the words and music of his *chanson* “Madame je suis plus joyeulx.” Five hundred and sixty-eight of the pearls were used to make the 142 notes, four pearls *en quarré* for each note (Laborde, entry 6241, 267; this work contains, in spite of its title, an invaluable inventory of the possessions of Charles’s family, including book inventories). On this *robe* and others like it, see Michel 110–11 (on the conspicuous wealth of his family, see 392–93).

⁵³ *Charles d’Orléans*, 90; this is a useful little book. Jean Tardieu likens the French *rondeaux* to “[les] danses de mots” (Charprier, 94).

is retardataire in his themes and forms. His experiments in English poetry display more than a poet's attempt to write in a foreign language; the English poems are an experiment in the English manner and in English forms as well.

The failure of critics to see the "play" in his English poetry has resulted in many unappreciative remarks about the duke and his work. Charles's is a mind that never lapses, a mind darting here and there, taking in information from the outside world and guarding it carefully, acting always in a state of high consciousness, manipulating the world around it. Even when his English poetry fails as poetry, it is often possible to see and appreciate the patterning force in the poet that was wrestling with the English language, attempting to force meaning to march in step with fixed form. The faults in his English poetry are faults caused by lack of skill in a foreign language and lack of time for revision—or perhaps lack of interest in it. Charles is not the confused, helpless narrator, torn by his emotions, paralyzed by his compact with the God of Love, endlessly spinning out his eloquent but dolorous rhetoric because he is powerless to do anything else. It is easy to underestimate Charles of Orleans as a man and as a poet, and paradoxically it is Charles himself who has made it so easy for us to do so.

Chronology

1394

On 24 November Charles of Orleans is born, the first son (to survive past infancy) of Louis of Orleans (brother of Charles VI) and Valentina Visconti of Milan, at the royal Hôtel de Saint-Pol in Paris (but grows up largely outside the capital at various residences).

1406

At the age of eleven, Charles marries a sixteen-year-old cousin, Isabelle (daughter of Charles VI and Queen Isabeau of France), widow of Richard II of England.

1407

Louis d'Orléans is assassinated in Paris by the Burgundians under John the Fearless (23 November).

1408

Valentina dies at Blois at the age of thirty-eight (4 December); Charles comes into his inheritance (and becomes duke of Orleans) at the age of fourteen.

1409

Isabelle bears Charles a daughter, Jeanne, but dies within a few days (13 September). Charles turns fifteen.

1410

Charles allies himself with the Armagnac faction and marries the eleven-year-old Bonne, daughter of Bernard, count of Armagnac, and niece of the duke of Berry (15 August).

1412

Charles sends his twelve-year-old brother, Jean of Angoulême, to England as a hostage in the custody of the duke of Clarence (14 November).

Charles's captivity begins**1415**

Charles, dressed in a suit of Milanese armor and newly knighted, is captured at the battle of Agincourt (25 October) and taken to England. He is nearly twenty-one.

*November 1415–June 1417, London/Westminster/Windsor*⁵⁴

1417

In June Charles is sent to Pontefract (Yorks), in custody of Robert Waterton.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Entries in italics refer to shorter trips, usually known from the existence of dated documents. These “trips” do not represent all of Charles’s travels in England, and the dates are not intended to be inclusive; they serve merely as markers of some of the duke’s movements in England in an attempt to give the lie to the idea that he simply “pined away” for decades in one or another castle, as if in a kind of luxurious solitary confinement. His years in England were often very busy ones, though he certainly suffered from time to time from long periods of inactivity. For a parallel (but not identical) itinerary, see Champion, *Vie*, 659–87.

Charles was initially held in the Tower of London. John Fox chose as the frontispiece for his *Lyric Poetry* a reproduction of the beautiful miniature from British Library MS. Royal 16 F ii of Charles as a prisoner in the Tower with London Bridge in the background (also in Champion, *Vie*, 161).

⁵⁵ Lucy de Angulo provides a useful map of the places Charles was held (80f.). See H. Armstrong Hall. Information on all Charles’s keepers is available in Rymer, *Foedera*. More work needs to be done on all of Charles’s movements and acquaintances in England during this period.

1419

On 7 December Charles is given into the custody of Sir Nicholas Montgomery.

1419, Peterborough (Northants, now Cambs)

1420

Charles's brother Philip, count of Vertus, dies at the age of twenty-four; his half-brother Jean (later count of Dunois and commonly referred to, by himself and others, as the Bastard of Orleans), the only remaining male sibling in France, is sixteen. The custody of the duke is given to Sir Thomas Burton, warden of Fotheringay Castle (Northants).⁵⁶

June, London

1422

Charles is moved to Bolingbroke (Lincs), in custody of Thomas Comberworth. Henry V of England and Charles VI of France both die. In 1427 Joan of Arc, supported by Charles's valiant and faithful bastard brother, Jean, count of Dunois, takes up the cause of freeing France and the duke of Orleans from the control of the English. In 1429 Henry VI of England is crowned at the age of eight.

London: at least once a year, except possibly 1426.

17–18 March 1427, Canterbury (Kent)

*29 March 1427, Bourne (Lincs)*⁵⁷

4 September 1428, Peterborough (Northants, now Cambs)

1429

In December Charles is moved to Ampthill (Beds), in custody of Sir John Cornwall, Lord Fanhope, who also held his brother Jean.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ It is unclear exactly when Charles left Pontefract or whether he lodged with Montgomery, but as Burton was warden of Fotheringay Castle, perhaps he moved at this time (see Champion, *Vie*, 172; McLeod, 151).

⁵⁷ Laborde records the date as 1427 (no. 6437); Champion, as 1428 (*Vie*, 670).

⁵⁸ The question of when and how often the two brothers might have seen each other is a matter of dispute. Gilbert Ouy has written very persuasively in favor of the view that they spent a significant amount of time together in England ("Recherches"). Lucy de Angulo has written an extremely romanticized but largely unsubstantiated article elaborating on the findings of Ouy. Enid McLeod took issue with the findings of both. In turn, Cecily Clark (rightly, in my view) takes McLeod to task for a misplaced scepticism of Ouy's work, as well as for a certain

William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk (two years Charles's junior), is a prisoner of Charles's brother, count of Dunois, for some months after the battle of Jargeau in May 1429.

Cornwall's house in London repeatedly during 1430

1431

Henry VI is crowned king of France in the cathedral of Nôtre Dame in Paris on 16 December. On 29 May, Joan of Arc is burned at the stake.

1432

Charles's daughter Jeanne dies at the age of twenty-three; Charles's second wife, Bonne, dies at some point between 1430 and 1435.⁵⁹ Suffolk requests custody of Charles on 21 July.

17 June, London

December, Dorrington (Lincs)

1433

Charles moves to Wingfield (Suffolk), in the custody of the earl of Suffolk (and his wife Alice Chaucer). He is involved in peace negotiations with France which come to nothing.

*Wingfield/Ewelme (Oxon)/Wallingford and Donnington (Berks)*⁶⁰

12 February 1433, Ewell (Surrey)

27 May 1433, Westminster

June 1433, Dover (Kent)

6 August 1433, London (with Suffolk)

September 1435, Calais

1436

In May Charles moves to Sterborough (now Starborough, Surrey) near the village of Lingfield, in the custody of Sir Reynold Cobham. In 1437 Charles and his brother Jean meet briefly, perhaps for the first time since 1412.⁶¹

"slackness" ("Some English Perspectives," 254–55; McLeod cites the duke's poetry throughout as though it were historical evidence).

⁵⁹ Apparently no record of Bonne's death has survived. Some confusion has been caused by the death of her mother, for whom she was named, in 1435.

⁶⁰ These are all estates belonging to Suffolk (Ewelme and Wallingford via his duchess; see Smith, 112) to which Charles apparently often travelled with Suffolk. For general backgrounds, see Napier.

⁶¹ Though Ouy ("Recherches") has argued that the brothers spent time

London frequently between 1436 and 1439
13 July 1437 Peterborough (Northants, now Cambs)
28 October 1437 Sheen (Surrey)

1438

In July Charles moves to Stourton (Wilts), in the custody of Sir John Stourton.⁶²

25–26 May, 16 July 1438, London
28 July 1438, Winchester (Hants)
8 March 1439, London
25 May 1439, London
May–October 1439, Calais, Gravelines
May–July 1440, London/Westminster

1440

On 28 October Charles is formally released from captivity in a solemn ceremony in Westminster Abbey, from which Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, storms out in a rage. Charles sails for Calais on 5 November, where he is greeted by the Duke of Burgundy and his wife, Isabelle of Portugal, of the house of Lancaster, chief author of his release. He subsequently adopts the device XL and 40 to commemorate the year of his release.⁶³

Charles's captivity ends

1440

Charles, just turned forty-six, marries the fourteen-year-old Marie of Cleves, niece of Isabelle, duchess of Burgundy (27 November).

1445

Charles's brother, Jean of Angoulême, is released from English captivity after thirty-three years.⁶⁴

together and shared books, he makes no attempt to establish when during their captivity this was likely to have happened. It is to be hoped that more work will be done on this question.

⁶² On the relation of the Stourtons to the Chaucers, see Manly and Rickert (hereafter Manly-Rickert), 614–15. Germaine Dempster suggests that Stourton was a close associate of Thomas Chaucer (407). See Joseph Stevenson, 1:432–33.

⁶³ For a reproduction of this device, with Karolus, the usual form of his name, see Charpier, 209.

⁶⁴ His brother was a man of a serious turn of mind (Champion calls him

1457

At thirty-two, after seventeen years of marriage, Marie of Cleves bears Charles a daughter, Marie.

1460

François Villon, a guest at Blois, writes a poem to celebrate the birth.

1461

Charles VII dies; Louis XI ascends the throne.

1462

Marie bears Charles a son, the future Louis XII, known during his reign as the Father of his People.

1464

Marie bears Charles a daughter, Anne.

1465

Charles of Orleans dies at the age of seventy (4 January) and his English poetry is soon forgotten.

Works

Along with his abiding interest in books and their contents, Charles inherited his father's impressive library, enlarging it greatly in his long lifetime.⁶⁵ In addition to philosophy, medicine, and literature, he was interested in the games of chess and tables, an interest that found its way into his poetry; he annotated a book on the games of chess and

"l'érudit"), as the comments he wrote in the copy of the *Canterbury Tales* he had made for him during his years in England make clear (see Crow; Champion, "Liber Amicorum," 321).

⁶⁵ His mother, Valentina, owned a library, as did many members of his family, including his third wife, Marie of Cleves. For inventories of all of these collections, see Pierre Champion, *La Librairie*. While in England he both had books brought from France and acquired books or had them made on the spot. An inventory of the books he brought back from England in 1440 can also be found in *La Librairie*, xxv–xxix. Karen Newman's statement that "he owned no romances and no classical works except Seneca" is not true (319); he owned works by Aristotle (6 MSS), Hippocrates, Galen, Aesop, Juvenal, Terence, Lucan, Virgil (4 MSS), Sallust (2 MSS), Cato (3 MSS), Ovid, and others, as well as a *Lancelot*, a *Roman d'Arthur*, and *Le Saint-Grail*. Her general characterization of Charles's library is skewed.

tables, which is extant.⁶⁶ His collection of religious works, both theological and devotional, attests to his deep and informed piety. His own work, therefore, was fed by his wide reading on many subjects. Charles wrote poetry in three languages: Latin, French, and English. In Latin, he composed *Livre contre tout péche* at the age of ten (a work on the seven deadly sins), the *Canticum Amoris*, in the last years of his captivity,⁶⁷ as well as at least one lyric (Carole IV) and some Latin/French macaronic verse, (Chansons LXXXVI and LXXXVII).⁶⁸

His early poetry in French, "le livre qu'il fit en Inglant," roughly parallels in part the early English poetry; it is made up of a long introductory allegorical narrative in decasyllabic couplets on the model of the opening of the *Roman de la rose*; a series of ballades which involve a shadowy story of a love affair, the lady's death, and the lover's mourning; and a dream vision in which Age convinces the narrator to withdraw from the service of Love. Love grants him the return of his heart and a quittance dated 1 November 1437. The lover withdraws to the chateau *Nonchaloir*, from which he writes to Love to explain that his unseemly behavior at his leave-taking was caused by his grief. Charles wrote many miscellaneous lyrics while in England, including at least fifty chansons, a few ballades not included in his larger work (including some on subjects other than love), and a few lyrics in other forms (complainte, carole). On his return to France, Charles continued to write poetry, preferring lyric forms, especially the rondeau, to narra-

⁶⁶ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS. lat. 10286; see discussion below, "Chess and tables." On his medical library and medical references in his poetry, see Robert W. Linker, 95–100.

⁶⁷ For the text of the *Livre* see Champion, *Poésies*, 545–50. The *Canticum Amoris* opens with an exhortation from the poet to his heart to love God more than His creation and ends with an invitation to contemplate the Trinity. It is a work in the Franciscan mold and one clear piece of evidence that Charles had dealings with the Franciscans in England. For another, he returned to France with a volume of John of Hoveden, which he borrowed from the Franciscans of London and never returned (Ker, 123). For more information and the text of the poem see Ouy ("Poème" and "A propos"), who first identified the poem as Charles's.

⁶⁸ These last precede two of his English lyrics, suggesting that perhaps he considered those of his lyrics not written (entirely) in French a special category of verse. Champion says of the Latin *carole*, "la carole chantée pour Noël demeura un usage particulièrement anglais. Il est probable que cette prose latine . . . est une composition originale de Ch. d'O. en souvenir de sa captivité en Angleterre" (*Poésies*, 574). On the duke's work in Latin and references to the language, see Planche, *Recherche d'un langage*, 96–105.

tive, and leaving behind him the by then antiquated chanson form. By the time of his death he had composed some four hundred rondeaux.

In addition to *Fortunes Stabilnes*, nine English lyrics in his own manuscript of poems by himself and his friends are frequently attributed to him, as are two poems found in British Library MS. Royal 16 F.ii (see Appendix I for a transcription and an account of all known texts of these poems).⁶⁹ I have not offered commentary on the texts or the manuscripts of any of the English poems not part of *Fortunes Stabilnes*. They are included here simply for the sake of completeness.

The State of Charles's English

The tantalizing comment in Hall's *Chronicle* that, after twenty-five years' imprisonment, Charles "was deliuered out of Englande into Fraunce at that tyme, bothe speakyng better Englishe then Frenche, and also swearyng, neuer to beare Armure againt the kyng of Englande" is unfortunately too late to carry much authority,⁷⁰ but contemporary testimony concerning Charles's English comes from his friend René d'Anjou, who wrote in 1457:

Car prins fuz des Anglois et mené en seruaige.
Et tant y demouray qu'en aprins le langaige
Par lequel fus acoint de dame belle et saige,
Et d'elle si espris qu'a Amours fis hommaige. . . .⁷¹

Champion then adds: "Mais ce passage du roi René est plus lourd de conséquences. A mon sens, il rouvre la question de la traduction anglaise des poésies de Charles d'Orléans et semble bien montrer que le problème doit être étudié dans le sens indiqué par Watson Taylor, point de vue qui a été nié par l'école néo-critique et naturellement par la critique allemande."⁷² Enid McLeod remarks that King René's

⁶⁹ His own manuscript, B.N. MS. f.fr. 25458, is often referred to as an autograph manuscript. Though it is in fact only partially autograph, I shall refer to it as the "autograph manuscript" for the sake of economy. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the autograph portions (except for a few minor corrections and the addition of a few headings) are all to be found in the section of the manuscript ("le fonds primitif") written after the duke's release from captivity (see Champion, *Le Manuscrit autographe*, 20).

⁷⁰ 1548 edition, fol. 111; 1809 edition, 193. Holinshed, in his chronicle, took over the quotation from Hall.

⁷¹ From his *Livre du Cueur d'Amours espris*, quoted in Pierre Champion, "A propos," 583.

⁷² "A propos," 584.

comment on Charles's love life in England points not only to Charles's knowledge of English for the purposes of "love talk" but just as certainly to the lady's slender (inadequate?) knowledge of French.⁷³

Charles must have had ample opportunity to learn English, beginning with his first sojourn in England, at Pontefract, where he certainly went on outings with Robert Waterton and his family.⁷⁴ Even if his keepers made an effort to speak to him in French, he must have been surrounded by people who were not of the nobility and knew little or no French. He was not, after all, a prisoner who lived in a cell, but a royal (and expensive) guest. Scholars are agreed that, although Charles was not at liberty to travel in England, he was certainly not deprived of the company of either his hosts or his servants. Surely it would have been in Charles's interests politically, whatever status the English language had in his eyes, to learn English well in order to understand all that went on around him, *especially* that which was not intended primarily for his ears.

That he was young enough to learn the language easily and that he had ample opportunity to hear English seems beyond question. There is nothing inherently implausible about the proposition that he left England speaking better English than French. That he would have had access to English books seems equally certain. His brother Jean did. An English prisoner himself for thirty-three years, Jean of Angoulême had a copy of the *Canterbury Tales* made for him in the Northern dialect he must have spoken.⁷⁵ One of the manuscripts Charles brought back to France with him contained "a great many prayers addressed to different saints, several of them English, which seem to suggest that he had read similar texts in English and had them translated."⁷⁶

In a three-part letter to his lord, Philip of Burgundy, written in 1433, Hue de Lannoy describes a somewhat tense meeting with Charles of Orleans in the presence of the earl of Suffolk, his "host" in England at that time. Charles clearly did not feel free to express himself

⁷³ 215.

⁷⁴ Ellis, *Original Letters*, 1.2.

⁷⁵ See Crow, "John of Angoulême," 86–99. Susan Crane has recently called into question the long-held assumption that the annotations in Paris, B.N. MS. fonds anglais 39, commenting on the content, are by Jean and not his scribe, Duxworth (lecture, New Chaucer Society, 1992).

⁷⁶ McLeod, 166. For a detailed description see Champion, *La Librairie*, 80–81 (Laborde 6524). The English saints include St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Thomas of Lancaster, St. Frideswide, St. Etheldrude, and St. Edithe.

to the Burgundian embassy, nor was he satisfied with the strained communication which had passed between them, for, Lannoy says,

about two days after this came to us one called Jennin Cauvel, the barber of the earl of Suffolk, and one of the guards appointed by the said earl over my lord of Orleans, and he said to us, 'I have always been a true and loyal Burgundian, and moreover I am a native of the country of my lord of Burgundy, of his town of Lille, and therefore I love him with all my heart as my natural lord. And that I may caution you, since it has been openly said that my lord of Orleans thoroughly hates my lord of Burgundy, and that if he could escape, he would make fierce war on him, and do him much damage, I assure you on my faith, because I speak French, he is pleased to put more trust in me than in any other of his guards, or in any one whatever in our house'⁷⁷

and he proceeds to assure the Burgundian embassy of the duke's friendship.

This passage says more than that the house guards were accustomed to speaking English. If this guard is telling the truth (and I see no good strategic reason for him to lie about it), then French was not commonly spoken by anyone in the household of the earl of Suffolk (which is not to say that the earl and his family could not speak French), and, as the barber makes clear that it was no extraordinary thing for the duke to converse with his guards, Charles felt more comfortable or confident with—felt he could trust—a French speaker more than a speaker of English (because the walls didn't have French-speaking ears?). Conversely, Charles must have carried on day to day intercourse with the members of the earl's household in English. This would square with recent ideas on the status of English in the early fourteenth century.⁷⁸

In describing in the same letter his reception by King Henry VI to his lord the duke of Burgundy, Hue says of the young king that, when presented with letters from Burgundy, he "asked us very graciously, and in the French language, how you were, and where you were."⁷⁹ The king was about twelve years old at the time. In a similar episode,

⁷⁷ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, 2.1.235–36.

⁷⁸ See, for instance, Berndt; Kibbee characterizes the period between 1362 and the Age of Printing as one in which "French is dead as a mother tongue in England, even among the highest nobility" (92).

⁷⁹ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, 2.1.225.

Froissart comments on the French of Richard II in 1395.⁸⁰ It is most unlikely that Hue would have noted that the king spoke French unless it were in some way remarkable.

Two of these poems he entered into his personal manuscript himself, using English orthography (thorn for *th*, the ampersand, etc.),⁸¹ which implies that he not only recognized the symbols but was in the habit of using them. Pierre Champion adds, "une de ces pièces, transcrite de sa main, est la combinaison de deux autres pièces que Charles d'Orléans a écrites en français." The entire passage reads,

que Charles d'Orléans ait parfaitement su l'anglais, c'est ce que laisse entendre le discours que Gloucester prononça quand il fut question au conseil anglais de renvoyer en France le duc prisonnier. Et cette notion résulte aussi des pièces anglaises qui se rencontrent dans le ms. fr. 25458, c'est-à-dire dans le petit registre des compositions de Charles d'Orléans en partie autographe. Or, une de ces pièces, transcrite de sa main, est la combinaison de deux autres pièces que Charles d'Orléans a écrites en français.⁸²

One of the two source poems is *Chanson LXI*, of which Champion says, "La pièce anglaise transcrite par Ch. d'O. p. 346 du ms. O est comme la traduction de cette chanson" (*Poésies*, 2.567). (This *chanson* is the eighth beyond the end of the series adapted into English.) He never states which is the other source poem, but the very fact that Charles reworked material used earlier, and in another language, will be material to a later argument. In commenting on another English poem in the autograph manuscript (*Chanson LXXXIX*, *Poésies*, 2.569), Champion notes two images which are borrowed from French poems found in the same manuscript (*Ballades XVIII* and *XLIII*).

Authorship of the English Poems

Fortunes Stabîlnes, which includes nearly all of Charles of Orleans's work in English, has been the subject of a long and fitful controversy concerning its patrimony. The controversy over the authorship of these English poems began in 1827 when Sir Thomas Croft flatly denied George Watson Taylor's attribution of a body of poems he found in the

⁸⁰ For an English translation see Ker, *Chronicle of Froissart*, 6.147.

⁸¹ See Champion, *Poésies*, 2.569.

⁸² "A propos," 583-84.

British Museum to Charles, duke of Orleans. Francisque Xavier Michel echoed Croft's sentiments (if not his arguments) in 1838—and so the lines were drawn. A number of Continental scholars from a fairly early date followed Michel and Croft in declaring (sometimes categorically, sometimes in extensive discussion) that the poems must be the work of a (presumably English) translator.⁸³ Anglo-American scholars have generally, though not exclusively, supported the claim that Watson Taylor made for the duke's authorship of the work.⁸⁴ In the absence of documentary evidence (beyond the work itself, which names *Charlis, duk of Orlyounce* three times), proof of Charles's authorship cannot be conclusive, but the manuscript evidence seems to favor overwhelmingly Charles as author. There is strong linguistic evidence, too, that the poems were written by a Frenchman; the only reasonable deduction from that evidence is that that Frenchman can only be Charles himself.

If Steele and Day are correct⁸⁵ in invoking Chaucer's "definition" of "jubilee" in the *Summoner's Tale* (1859–62): to celebrate having held an office for fifty years, the narrator is indeed old at the time of his jubilee—hardly less than sixty-five at least if he entered Love's service very young. Such an age does not at all accord with the lover's repeated statement that he wants to avoid Elde (which he has apparently succeeded in doing), or with the action that follows the jubilee. The narrator is obviously celebrating his retirement, but this need have no connection with a period of fifty years. (In fact, if a *papal* jubilee is

⁸³ The primary workers in this vineyard are Poirion ("Création poétique" and "Un secret désir"; Cigada, *L'Opera*, 54–56, and "Christine de Pisan," Stemmler, who subsumes the arguments of earlier German skeptics, and MacCracken ("An English Friend"), whose arguments are refuted by Jansen ("Fairfax Poems"). In the 1920s, Pierre Champion, the editor of Charles's French poems, did not take a firm stand on either side of the question, calling the English poems "une énigme."

⁸⁴ The primary defenders are Steele and Day, Goodrich (*Themes*), Fox ("Poète anglais?"), and Cellini. John Fox's strongly argued article is built on suggestions by Steele and Day (made throughout their volume, but especially in an appendix "On the Relation between the French and English Versions" [302–6]), in which they discuss divergences, linguistic peculiarities, translation strategies, and word play. Cecily Clark, while declaring the dispute open, presents evidence for Charles's authorship of the work in "Charles d'Orleans: Some English Perspectives" (as well as in her review of Sasaki). An exhaustive list of scholars who have commented on the authorship question will be found in the forthcoming volume of the revised Wells *Manual* on the lyric, but the significant voices in the controversy can all be found listed in the Works Cited in this volume.

⁸⁵ 3104n.

being implied—and it is not certain that it is—Urban VI declared a jubilee of thirty years as early as the 1300s.) The term may mean no more than the poet himself says it does: a time of release and retirement from service.

It is difficult to see how Harley 682, which is laid out very much like the autograph manuscript, could have come into being unless both manuscripts were made prior to 1440 in England (and only the latter taken back to France).⁸⁶ If Daniel Poirion were right, that the “*ju-bilé*” of *Ballade LXXII* was written in 1444 to mark Charles’s fiftieth birthday, four years after his return to France, Poirion’s hypothetical “English translator” could hardly have written a version of the same poem (*Ballade 83*).⁸⁷ If the jubilee poem was written before 1440, the question remains as to why the manuscripts are so similar in layout (see below, “The Manuscripts”). Why pattern the layout of the English roundels, for instance, after the French chansons, copying one poem to a page and leaving the upper portion of the page blank? It is difficult to see why a translator would care about such details of layout, especially as he had no material, either pictorial or musical, to give him any reason to leave so much space blank. It would seem to be an artist’s (and owner’s) quirk rather than a copyist’s sense of propriety which would dictate such a choice.⁸⁸

In the margins of the autograph manuscript of French poems, some

⁸⁶ The order of the poems is very similar; the chansons/roundels have space above each for decoration which was never filled in; the fixed-form verse always begins on a new leaf.

⁸⁷ “Un secret désir,” 517, and *Le Lexique*, under *ju-bilé*. In “Création poétique,” Poirion seems to realize that there is something amiss here, for he says of the jubilee, “Cette présentation [in the English poems] change complètement le sens du recueil, lui imposant une mise en scène dont on voit mal les raisons. A moins que Charles d’Orléans n’ait précisément fêté son Jubilé” (193). Although the duke plays on various details of his own experience in his poetry (both French and English), he gives no warrant for reading his poems as straightforward autobiography—quite the reverse, as the Burgundy poems attest.

⁸⁸ Sometime after 1453, his personal secretary, Antonio Astesano, translated Charles’s French poetry into Latin (Bibl. Grenoble MS. 873), likewise leaving space above each roundel. This manuscript was written with Charles’s permission and under his supervision (see Champion, *Poésies*, 1.xii–xv). There are other anomalies to be accounted for, too. If the “translator” were interested in tidying up the French work and making it more regular and “romanesque” (Poirion’s term), why include the little miscellany of poems at the end of the roundel section (after a poem of twenty-four stanzas with no French counterpart ending the “jubilee” section), written in various forms and performing no very clear function in the whole?

poems have been renumbered, and the re-ordering was adopted by the scribe of the English manuscript. Poirion has suggested that perhaps Charles corrected his copyist, who transcribed the French poems in the wrong order and that the English order is therefore perhaps the correct one. If this is so, the autograph manuscript must have been in England when the English copy was made, or vice versa.⁸⁹ Poirion says that

Le fonds ancien de O [the autograph manuscript] peut donc avoir été rédigé avant son retour d'Angleterre. . . . C'est peut-être ce livre que le poète a ramené, définitivement constitué et que désigne un inventaire: "Le Livre des Balades de Monseigneur a ung fermouer a ses armes" (De Laborde III, 6.545). Mais il n'est pas impossible que le manuscrit définitif ait été composé un peu plus tard, lorsque le duc eut retrouvé le calme, après l'agitation de son retour et ses rêves d'action politique.⁹⁰

But the autograph manuscript could not have been made in France; it must have been made in England before 1440. The question has been settled by Patricia Stirnemann, who has identified the (English) decoration of the autograph manuscript with that of other manuscripts made for the duke in England and established that Champion's analysis of the stages of composition of the manuscript accords perfectly with her own art historical findings. She dates the manuscript 1439–1440, places it in England (London), and identifies it tentatively with item 65 in the December 1440 inventory of the duke's books: *Plusieurs kaieres de parchemin, nouvellement escripts et enluminez, apportez d'Angleterre, qui ne sont point reliez.*⁹¹

Unlike French ballades, which may have stanzas of varying lengths but the same rhymes in every stanza, English ballades that have survived from the Middle Ages are written most commonly in eight-line stanzas (the seven-line stanza is a close second in popularity), with a new set of rhymes in each stanza (three is usual). The ballades of Charles's second sequence demonstrate a movement away from the stricter demands of French prosody to those of English, a movement that took place at a certain time in his literary life and that involved a number of different kinds of changes all at once (see Appendix II for a

⁸⁹ "Création poétique," 190. Later copies of the French manuscript take no account of the marginal renumbering.

⁹⁰ "Création poétique," 192.

⁹¹ Avril and Stirnemann, 180–81.

summary of forms). It is difficult to see why a translator would have felt, with all his attempts to “match” the style and content of the French poems, that he could simply use a drastically different (English) form for a number of the ballades he himself composed.

Near the end of the work are translations of two poems by the duke of Burgundy (Ballades 111, 6227–54, and 113, 6283–6313). They are based on letters (in ballade form) exchanged with the duke of Burgundy, as part of the process of reconciliation which eventually led to Charles’s release in 1440. The letters in question, two out of a handful of poems exchanged, were written in 1439, at a time when the English were being extraordinarily careful of their prisoner. The author of the English poems had these two poems in his possession, for he produced two English love poems based on them, addressed to the lady of the second ballade sequence.⁹² Whoever wrote Ballades 112 and 113 must have had access to the correspondence that passed between Orleans and Burgundy (which does not appear in Charles’s autograph manuscript). Charles was no longer in the friendly, cultured household of the earl of Suffolk at this point, but in the charge of Sir John Stourton in Wiltshire, and he had good reason to believe that his release was near. To whom, then, would Charles have entrusted these two ballades? No single piece of evidence argues so strongly for Charles of Orleans as the only possible author of the English poems.

Internal evidence confirms the conclusion that Charles wrote *Fortunes Stabîles*. The poet’s preference for masculine rhyme and his habit of rhyming on unstressed final syllables; his conflation of [-i:] and [-e:] (as well as [i] and [e]) rhymes; his un-English word order; his occasionally bizarre spellings; his use of unusual or incorrect prepositions, tenses, parts of speech, and colloquialisms; his dependence on a few prefixes, like *for-*, *a-*, and *en-*; and his creation of forms ending in *-ment*—all point to a Frenchman, who can only have been Charles, as author of the work.⁹³ The most interesting confirmation of his authorship, however, lies in the sound play spotted by Steele and Day and analyzed further by Fox.⁹⁴ The reason their arguments have not been fully accepted is perhaps that not enough attention has been paid to the

⁹² See Charles’s ballade-letter to Burgundy on the subject of the necessity of dissembling, and especially of concealing their friendship (Ballade XCIV).

⁹³ For detail on all these points, see my article, “Harley 682.”

⁹⁴ In his “Poète anglais?” but doubted by Poirion (“Création poétique”) and Stemmler, who consider the word play the errors of an English translator.

unlikeliness (for the work of a translator) of some of the correspondences between French and English poems. For instance, "N'a pas long temps qu'alay parler / A mon cuer" (Ballade VI) becomes "Not long ago I hyed me apase / . . . myn hert forto counsayle" (Ballade 6, 350). Here "[N]a pas" has been transmuted into "apase." In another passage, the sound of "agree" is transposed into "in gre": "Recevez le, s'il vous plaist et agree" (Chanson XXVI); "And him in gre take as yowre servaunt swore" (Roundel 26, 3511). There is no possibility here of translation (or mistranslation) of meaning—only of a play on spelling and sound.⁹⁵ This kind of word play is not unusual in the work; in fact such "sound-alikes" are sprinkled thickly through the poems. Steele and Day have included a number in their notes, but further instances are recorded in the explanatory notes in this volume, and there are surely more to be discovered. Their density accords with the wit and word play of other sorts in both Charles's French and his English poems, and argues for common authorship of both.

Date and Provenance

The date of the completion of the English poems and their arrangement in the form in which we have them can be fixed with some accuracy. The poetic exchange with Burgundy that Charles rewrote as Ballades 111 and 113 (see above) took place during 1439. Charles left England in 1440, leaving the manuscript behind. The Harley manuscript, which was almost certainly laid out using the French manuscript as a model (or, less likely, vice versa), must accordingly be dated 1439–1440.

The dates of composition of the earlier poems can be established with no such certainty, however. Charles may have begun composing poetry in English before 1420, or he may have begun a decade later. Some of the poems may have been composed in large groups while others were "strung out" over very long periods of time.⁹⁶ Of course Charles must have begun only after he had acquired enough English to make the work appealing, but we know with some certainty only that the poems were composed between, say, ?1420 and 1440.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ For more examples of this sort of word play, see my article, "Translator?"

⁹⁶ I have addressed some of these questions in "Harley 682." Attempts to date the poems by references to May Day and Valentine's Day within the poems are unconvincing and extremely problematic.

⁹⁷ Enid McLeod, Charles's biographer, seems to know which poems were composed when (as do some other scholars), though no one has presented any

Nor do we know in precisely what part of England they were composed, since Charles was moved many times in the course of his captivity. We do know most of his movements in detail, however, so that clues to his composition may lie in historical records in a number of noble houses in the Midlands and around London (see above, "Chronology"). Where Charles left the manuscript on his return to France is uncertain. His last residence was Stourton, in Wiltshire, but he spent time in London repeatedly during his last years in England (as he did throughout his captivity), and he might have had the manuscript made there or had it with him when he last visited there.

The Influence of *Fortunes Stabilnes* on Later English Works
Fortunes Stabilnes seems to have attracted little attention from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth, finding its way, even in fragments, into no early printed text. It was apparently read by at least a few people in the immediate aftermath of Charles's departure from England, however. At least one copy was made of Harley 682 (see below, "The Manuscripts"), fragments of which are to be found at Oxford and Cambridge. This or another copy was probably read by the author of *The Assembly of Ladies*. In particular, the description of Attemperance in that work seems to echo Charles's description of Fortune (519-39).⁹⁸ Written in the literary dialect of London English in the third quarter of the fifteenth century or a little later, probably by a practicing poet, *The Assembly of Ladies* gives us a glimpse, at least, of the immediate afterlife of Charles's English work. At the same time, it provides some evidence that the manuscript Charles left behind may have been left in or near London or have quickly made its way into that general area. Robert Steele has suggested that Charles's work influ-

solid evidence to support such claims. Champion went so far as to present a detailed *Chronologie* of Charles's French poems (xxii-xxvi), but then he believed that

cette histoire [of his poetry], le poète la disposera harmonieusement; le recueil de ses compositions s'augmentera progressivement, suivant les péripéties de sa vie intérieure. Préface, conclusion, anniversaires, fêtes de Saint-Valentin et de mai, rien ne manque à cette chronologie sentimentale.

(*Vie*, v-vi)

I trust I am not alone in believing that it is not sound practice to read either biography or (literary) history from art (which is not to say that a knowledge of biography or history cannot be useful in the study of literature).

⁹⁸ In his edition of the poem, Pearsall has detailed the borrowings from *Fortunes Stabilnes* (*The Floure and the Leafe*, 18 n. 1).

enced Richard Roos in his translation of Alain Chartier's poem, *La Belle Dame sans merci*.⁹⁹

Literary and Formal Considerations

Sources and Influences

The influences of contemporaries and predecessors (from both sides of the Channel) on Charles's English poetry are often subtle and diffuse. B. A. Windeatt's descriptions of Geoffrey Chaucer's borrowings as "creative adaptation" or "re-creative translation and refashioning" or an "imaginatively selective response to the larger movement of his sources" might equally well apply to the borrowings of Charles of Orleans.¹⁰⁰ Though verbal echoes of various writers are to be found in *Fortunes Stabilnes*, ideas and images are more often reinterpreted and recombined with other borrowings or with Charles's own creations to produce passages which carry the (sometimes unmistakable) fragrance of other works without looking at all like them.

ENGLISH: Daniel Poirion writes of the "influence anglaise" even on Charles's early chansons,¹⁰¹ and indeed various English influences played upon all that Charles wrote. While Charles took his French literary tradition with him when he went to England and made use of it in both bodies of poetry, his greatest debt among English poets is undoubtedly to Chaucer,¹⁰² though specific debts are usually difficult to pin down. *Fortunes Stabilnes* is a remarkably original work, however traditional its forms and however well it fits into certain categories of tradition and technique current in the fifteenth century. Specific borrowings from Chaucer's work are relatively few, though verbal echoes do occur. Steele and Day, for instance, point to a "general resemblance" between "The Complaint unto Pity" and lines 161-74 of Charles's poem.

⁹⁹ He does not support his claim that Roos borrows phrases from Charles (xix), but I have noted a few verbal parallels in the explanatory notes.

¹⁰⁰ There is no better introduction to Charles's approach to his sources than Barry Windeatt's preface to *Chaucer's Dream Poetry*, ix-xvii. Though I would not claim that Charles's English poetry is comparable to Chaucer's in quality, both seem to have approached the process of "creation" from the same direction, using the work of others freely but never imitating it slavishly.

¹⁰¹ *Le Poète et le prince*, 287.

¹⁰² See Hammond, *English Verse*, 214-15.

The most striking parallel between *Fortunes Stabilnes* and Chaucer's work would seem to be Ballade 72, which depicts the lover awakened by "an oost of foules" who are choosing their mates on Valentine's Day, but in fact Charles may have borrowed this scene from the French poets Grandson or Christine de Pizan, or even from Gower.¹⁰³ If he did borrow anything from the *Parliament of Fowls*, he took very little, contenting himself with a few details of setting and an occasional phrase.

For material more to his liking, Charles turned to the *Book of the Duchess*. His fusion of lover and narrator has interesting implications in the latter half of Charles's work, as the narrator is faced with his lack of success in love.¹⁰⁴ The lady, unlike the good, fair White, is described almost entirely in terms of her external charms (beauty and demeanor) and her effect on others, whereas Chaucer's knight dwells on his lady's inner virtues. (The poet's failure to attribute virtue to the lady explicitly is unusual in substantial works involving *fin amors*.) Like the Black Knight, Charles's narrator plays chess with his enemy, though he names him as Daunger, aided by Fortune (Ballade 61). Like him, our lover has lost his queen (*lady*). It is Fortune, however, who has taken his lady, "overthrown" his game, and "mated" the lover.¹⁰⁵ Verbal parallels also imply a knowledge of Chaucer's poem (cf. *Book of the Duchess* 595–97 with *Fortunes Stabilnes* 5856–58, Ballade 99). Evidence that Charles of Orleans knew the *Book of the Duchess* by the time he

¹⁰³ All four make use of this convention and their work may well have been known to Charles (see Henry Ansgar Kelly, 64–76, 134–38, Bennett, and Braddy, 71–85). That Ballade 72 has a French counterpart that is very similar to the English could be taken as evidence that he had encountered this set of ideas in the work of a French poet (for a translation of Grandson's *Le Songe saint Valentin*, see Windeart, 120–24), but it is just possible that he used an English formulation of the idea in his French poem (Ballade LXVI). For a summary of French and English poets who wrote on the subject, see Oruch, 557–61. Sarah Spence is mistaken when she states that I have argued that Chaucer influenced (Charles's?) French poetry in my article "The English Poetry of Charles of Orleans" (*French Chansons*, xxxii).

¹⁰⁴ Steele and Day detail the parallels, and Goodrich lists a number of general similarities between the two works (*Themes*, 88 n. 36). Of course not all the details mentioned here were unavailable to Charles from the French tradition—quite the contrary. Yet the density of parallels suggests that the Frenchman knew the English poem.

¹⁰⁵ This is an interesting inversion of an older tradition that juxtaposes chess, which is dominated by skill (i.e., virtue), and dice, which is dominated by fortune (see Tronzo).

composed much of his first sequence of ballades would seem to give the lie to those who would date his acquaintance with Chaucer's works to his years in the household of Alice Chaucer, countess of Suffolk.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ When Charles took up residence with them in 1433, Alice Chaucer, Geoffrey's granddaughter was (fairly recently) married to William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk (though only twenty-six years old, it was her third marriage; she was eight years older than the earl—Roskell, 184). This fact, together with the clear sympathy between the two noblemen which is evidenced in the records, has led many to suppose that Alice Chaucer introduced Charles to her grandfather's poetry (see Crow, 88 n. 5, who refers to Champion's quaint suggestion that Charles may have had an affair with her [see "A Propos," 584]). There are a number of assumptions involved in this proposition: that Alice was interested in (and perhaps owned copies of) Chaucer's poetry, that no other Englishman whom Charles had met had presented the prince (who was known to write poetry) with a sample of the best the English had to offer, and that Charles did not encounter Chaucer's poetry until he had been in England for nearly twenty years.

None of these assumptions, except perhaps the first, seems at all likely. Manly and Rickert, in describing the Chaucer manuscript owned by Charles's brother Jean, mention that Sir Thomas Comberworth, Charles's keeper between 1422 and 1429, owned a Chaucer manuscript (404), and Martin Crow says that Jean's Chaucer manuscript was corrected from an exemplar "which we should like to think belonged to Alice Chaucer and was lent through her husband, William de la Pole, to his friend, Angoulême" (96; see also 99). There is a good deal of wishing going on here. The magic inherent in the name Alice Chaucer does not seem to warrant the charming assumption that she was the first to present the French poet with the work of the Father of English Poetry—still less the even more charming assumption that she taught him English, as Gustave Cohen once suggested (125). Van Altena claims she herself wrote poetry as well (194, Xn) and that some scholars have suggested that she may have written the English poems (195, XIIn), but neither statement is supported by a citation.

For the possibility that there may have been a Chaucer manuscript in the de la Pole family, see Manly and Rickert (235, 613; also 614–15); but no copy of her grandfather's work is to be found in the list of the personal belongings she removed from Wingfield to her own house at Ewelme after her husband's death, though a number of other books are listed (Travis-Cook, 18–20). Travis-Cook's list of books is incomplete, however, as Carol Meale demonstrates (208). Though the duchess is thought to have commissioned Lydgate's *Virtues of the Mass* (a commentary on the mass, according to Schirmer, 176)—a work more likely to appeal for its religious sentiments than for any literary ones—her acts of patronage on Lydgate's behalf say nothing about her interest in her grandfather's poetry (see Pearsall, *Lydgate* 162, 258; for some doubt as to her patronage, see Samuel Moore, 204). Carol Meale has kindly provided a transcription of the list of Alice's manuscripts removed from Wingfield to Ewelme in 1466, among which appear *a frensh boke of quaterfitz Emond*, *a frensh boke of temps pastour*, Christine de Pizan's *Citee de dames*, *a frensh boke of the tales of philisphers*, and Lydgate's translation of *the pilgrymage*. Germaine Dempster has suggested that Chaucer "no doubt must have known well" Suffolk's father and grandfather (407). More work needs to be done on this group of people and their manuscripts.

Charles's setting of the encounter of the narrator with Venus on the seashore may owe something to Chaucer's sandy landscape in Book I of the *House of Fame* (see below, "Setting"), and Charles's ride on Venus's "coattails" up to Fortune's wheel in the second dream vision, his fear of heights, and his loud cry of "O lady Venus, mercy!" which wakes him from his dream would seem to owe something to *Geffrey's* flight in the claws of Chaucer's eagle.¹⁰⁷

Charles read *Troilus and Criseyde* and echoes it. Both lovers have memories of their absent ladies. Charles justifies his misery by describing his memories of his late lady to Venus (4822-44); Troilus rides through Troy sharing with Pandarus his memories of good times with Criseyde (V.561-81). The later passage was clearly not written with the earlier one in hand (as Lydgate's imitations often seem to be). Charles rather remembers the scene (which is surely one of the most pathetic and heart-rending in Chaucer's poem) and uses (twice, at lines 3416 and 4923), for his own quite different purposes, the idea of memories of a lady lost.¹⁰⁸

It is much more important to recognize the way in which Charles's work is suffused with Chaucerian material and techniques than to spot such parallels. Chaucer may not be Charles's exclusive source for his narrator, but his "Chaucerian" narrator does not develop fully until after the first ballade sequence has been written, and in the second dream vision Charles's humor is broader and the incongruities of the lover's situation are more evident than in the first. That these narrative techniques appear suddenly in a highly developed form that has no

¹⁰⁷ Though the similarity of Charles's description of the Venus floating on the sea (4760-67) to Chaucer's in *HF* (132-37) and *KnT* (1955-62) is probably fortuitous, as such brief descriptions are standard, the relationship of Venus as teacher to ex-lover as obtuse student is strongly reminiscent of the relationship of the eagle to Chaucer's narrator, though precise parallels are difficult to draw.

¹⁰⁸ In addition to the phrase "dubbil sorow," in Ballade 99 he echoes the "Litera Troili" (V.1373-79). For other verbal parallels, cf. 333 : iii.131 and v.923; 4962-63 : v.991-93; 5630 : ii.392; 5874 : v.1596; 6216-17 : iv.587-88; 6314-15 : v.1317-18. Although the "Troilus stanza" was popular in England in the early fifteenth century, the fact that it is the verse form chosen by Charles for the second (and I would say Chaucerian) dream vision may lend some additional credence to the idea that the author may have known the *Troilus* by this time.

In a passage that occurs early in the work (56-202) but was probably composed quite late (see below, "Order of Composition"), he echoes Chaucer's "Complaint unto Pity" (161-74, see also 629).

place in Charles's earlier French poetry points directly to Chaucerian influence.¹⁰⁹

Charles's acquaintance with the works of John Gower yielded a number of distinctive details in *Fortunes Stabilnes* that indicate his careful reading of the latter's work.¹¹⁰ Gower's portrait, in his *Confessio Amantis*, of an aging lover forced to come to terms with his unsuitability for love, who subsequently withdraws from Love's service, may have been the model for Charles's handling of the vision of Age and the lover's retirement to the Castle of No Care. Genius's demeanor and counsel in his final speech in the *Confessio* suggest those of Age, and the document, written in sadness, that Gower's narrator addresses to Cupid and Venus as the result of Genius's advice looks much like that composed on the advice of Age and presented to the God and Goddess of Love by Charles's narrator. Both poets deal with the incompatibility of love and age. One difference is, of course, that Gower's lover is genuinely old, as the mirror Venus gives him proves. Charles's lover, on the other hand, cannot have reached old age (or passed the age suitable to the service of Venus), since the God of Love tries to interest him in a new lady and Venus considers him ripe for a new love affair at the end of his period of "retirement."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ On the relation of the narrators of Machaut to those of Chaucer, see Wimsatt "Guillaume de Machaut," and William Calin, "Machaut's Legacy." Helen Louise Cohen suggests that the poet's replacement of a reference to *Yseud* with *Alcest* and his addition of *Dido* to his list of heroines in Ballade 64 may point to his acquaintance with LGW (*The Ballade*, 275). For a series of suggestions of borrowings from Chaucer, see Hammond, *English Verse*, 215. Much that has been written in recent years on French-English literary relations presents a useful backdrop for this work; see e.g., the work of Wilkins, Wimsatt, and Crépin.

¹¹⁰ Burrow suggests that "during his twenty-five years of captivity in England, the French prince could hardly have failed to learn something of an English poem then much in vogue, the *Confessio Amantis*; so it is not surprising to find that his 'Songe en complainte' [the French version of the vision of Age and withdrawal from love] bears a distinct resemblance to the closing pages of Gower's poem" (*Ages*, 186; see also "Portrayal").

¹¹¹ Another possibility is that we are to see the narrator as the kind of old fool (*senex amans*) that Age warns him about, but I see no evidence of this in the encounter with the new lady or the second ballade sequence.

Burrow has detailed resemblances between the withdrawal from love of Charles's lover and Gower's ("Portrayal of Amans," 19-20, and *Ages*, 186-88). Aging lovers are also well known in French literature. Machaut (*Voir-Dit*) and Froissart (*Le Joli Buisson*), among others, portray the incompatibility of Love and Age (see Burrow, *Ages*, 157-60; also his "Langland"). It is no surprise that the matter should arise repeatedly, since figures varied significantly. In Froissart's terms, youth (*Jonece*), or the age appropriate to Venus, lasts only from ages

It is likely, too, that Charles was acquainted with Gower's *Cinkante Ballades*, given the striking similarity in the way each poet treats the idea of Fortune.¹¹² In the *Confessio*, Gower seems to have anticipated, in a less brilliant way, Charles's concept of *Fortunes stabilnes*. Having presented his supplication in Book 8, Gower's lover makes his final plea to Cupid and Venus:

I se the world stonde evere upon eschange,
 Nou wyndes loude, and nou the weder softe;
 I mai sen ek the grete mone change,
 And thing which nou is lowe is eft alofte;
 The dredfull werres into pes fulofte
 Thei torne; and evere is Danger in o place,
 Which wol nocht change his will to do me grace.
 (8.2259-65)

It requires no more than a substitution of a word to change the *stabilnes* of *Danger* into that of *Fortune*. In Ballade 20 of *Cinkante Ballades*, Gower develops the idea further:

Fortune, om dist, de sa Roe vire ades;
 A mon avis mais il n'est pas ensi,
 Car as toutz jours la troeve d'un reles,
 Qe jeo sai nulle variance en li
 Ainz est en mes deseases establi,
 En bass me tient, q'a lever ne me lesse
 De mes amours est tout ceo qe jeo di,
 Ma douleur monte et ma joie descresce.

 Apres la guerre om voit venir la pes,
 Apres l'ivern est l'estée beal flori,
 Mais mon estat ne voi changer jammes,

fourteen to twenty-four (*Le Joli Buisson*, 1616-45; cf. *L'Espinette amoureuse*, 522-36, 605-8, and the chart of the ages of man reproduced in Wack, 99). Deschamps, in his *Lay du desert d'amours*, speaks of entering into love at fifteen (line 25) and of the end of *jeunesse* as thirty (lines 165-68). According to Burrow, other systems divided man's life differently, but the proper age for love seems always to have ended by a man's thirtieth year (see *Ages*, 51, 69-70, 85 and passim). The four ages mentioned in *Fortunes Stabilnes* (*childhode*, *youth*, *myddil age*, and *elde*) seem to be a conflation of four-age and seven-age schemes (see, e.g., *Ages*, 37-38). There is more work to be done on this question.

¹¹² Beaufls first suggested this (74-75). Cf. esp. Gower's Ballade 18 with Charles's 24 and 90 and their respective uses of Valentine and May imagery.

Qe jeo d'amour porrai troever merci.
 He, noble dame, pour quoi est il ensi?
 Soubtz vostre main gist ma fortune oppresse. . . .

The idea is clear enough, but Gower muddies the concept of *stabilnes* by introducing a refrain (*Ma dolour monte et ma joie descresce*) which implies the idea of alternation.¹¹³ Charles's ballade (4680ff.) on the nature of Fortune is, by contrast, clear and direct.

FRENCH: Charles's own library was impressive. Among the literary works he owned were the *Roman de la rose* (two copies), Jean de Meun's *Testament*, Arthurian material, works by Chartier, Froissart, Deschamps (ballades), and many other French authors, as well as anonymous poems and fables and the works of a number of classical authors, including Virgil and Statius. He owned a book entitled *Questions d'amour*, another called *Jardin d'amours*, various books designated simply *Ballades*, and a copy of the *Cent Ballades*.¹¹⁴ He both ordered books to be sent to him in England and acquired books there or had them copied. In his youth, Charles was surrounded by minstrels, musicians, and poets. His father, Louis, himself a contributor to the *Cent ballades*, entertained Froissart, Garençières, Boucicaut, and other poets and was a patron of Deschamps and of Christine de Pizan; we know that Charles read and admired Christine's poetry, for he adapted one of her poems into English.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Gower seems unaware of the wonderful possibilities this paradox presents; he employs the usual idea of mutable Fortune much more frequently in his poetry (as in *CA* 8.585–89). The second stanza of this passage also contains a formulation which bears a striking resemblance to 5436–39.

The influence of Lydgate, another likely English model, given the amount of and area from which he wrote, is impossible to trace. Although we know that John Lydgate visited the earl of Suffolk during Charles's stay at Wingfield and that, as a friend of Alice's father, Thomas Chaucer, he is very likely to have met the duke either at Ewelme or at Wingfield, I have been unable to find any convincing evidence that Charles knew Lydgate's poetry (as James I surely did). Lydgate does provide a large body of poetry which is useful for comparative linguistic and syntactical purposes, hence the many references to his works in the explanatory notes. See McLeod, 187; also Pearsall, *Lydgate*, 161–63, and Schirmer, 234–35).

¹¹⁴ Champion, *La Librairie*.

¹¹⁵ On Louis's court, see Champion, *Poésies*, xxiii. On Charles's adaptation of a poem by Christine de Pizan, see Urwin, and Cigada, "Christine de Pisan." He owned copies of her *Livre de prudence*, *Livre du corps de police*, *Chemin de longue étude*, and *Epitres sur le roman de la rose*. For a statement on the French influences on his early French poetry, see Champion, "Prince de lis," 42.

Influences on Charles's work are thus not far to seek. His poetry inevitably betrays an acquaintance with the *Roman de la rose*, especially in the early work, but its influence may well have made itself felt as much through poems written in the intervening years as through direct contact with the work of Guillaume and Jean. Charles's opening allegory, however (now lost in the English version), is strongly reminiscent of *Amant's* adventures in the Garden of *Déduit*.¹¹⁶

Charles could hardly have escaped the influence of Guillaume de Machaut and his followers, most of whose works were known to him.¹¹⁷ Though Chaucer provided the most graphic models, the inept and comic aspects of Charles's narrator would mark no serious departure from the tradition created by Jean de Meun, Machaut (*Le Jugement du roy de Behaingne*, *Remede de Fortune*, *Le Voir-Dit*, and especially *La Fonteinne amoureuse*), and Froissart. Charles's structuring of a narrative containing dream visions interspersed with lyrics in fixed forms, which are carefully prepared for within the narrative, all on the subject of love, is evidence that he shared in the literary tradition of Machaut, Froissart, Deschamps, Grandson, Christine de Pizan, and many others. That tradition was already developing the use of the debate and pseudo-autobiography, the narrator's preoccupation with Daunger, Fortune, and despair, and the presentation of realistic and pseudo-legal documents.¹¹⁸

Daniel Poirion has suggested that Charles, in some of his early French poems, was influenced by and shares something of the style of

The point has frequently been raised that Charles has left no evidence of having owned books in English. Although much can be learned by studying the lists of books he owned, it is dangerous, if not foolhardy, to argue from the absence of certain titles or kinds of books that he must not have known or cared for them. Following this line of reasoning, for instance, we would have to conclude that he did not know (or did not care about) most of the works of Machaut, Froissart, and many other forerunners and contemporary (love) poets (including François Villon).

¹¹⁶ On Froissart's reading of the *Rose* "through the medium of Machaut's reworkings," see Huot, *From Song to Book*, 304. Charles was exposed to the same medium, as well as to the poems of Froissart.

¹¹⁷ Daniel Poirion says, "On n'a pas retrouvé la trace des oeuvres de Machaut dans la librairie personnelle avant 1440; mais cet auteur figurait dans celle de Dunois en 1468. L'influence du maître semble se confirmer dans l'affabulation du "Service d'Amour," interprétation lyrique du thème de l'éloignement. Mais il est évident que les thèmes, les motifs, le langage de Machaut ont exercé une influence diffuse sur tout le lyrisme de cette époque" (*Le Poète et le prince*, 277-78; this passage is part of a larger discussion of French influences on Charles; see also Champion, "Prince de lis," 42).

¹¹⁸ See Douglas Kelly, 178-82. It is even possible that Charles was influenced by French poetry written in England by Englishmen, e.g., Gower's *Cinkante ballades* (see above).

Alain Chartier,¹¹⁹ but Chartier's influence is also discernible in the later English poems. The abjectness of the lover and the common-sense, practical approach of both Venus and the new lady to the problem of love recall a number of similar ladies in French courtly verse, but Chartier created the paradigm of such ladies.¹²⁰ What is more, John Fox suggests that, although it is possible that he arrived at it independently, Charles may have found his important attitude of *nonchaloir* (No Care) in Chartier's work.¹²¹

Le Songe vert, which apparently influenced Oton de Grandson, also has a number of ideas in common with *Fortunes Stabîlnes*, particularly with Charles's development of the transition from the narrator's first love to his second. The tone of *Le Songe vert* is utterly unlike that of *Fortunes Stabîlnes*, with none of the broad humor of the second dream vision. Even so, it may have provided a framework for Charles's conception of the reinvolvement of the bereaved lover in love.¹²²

Closer to home, we know that in his early years Charles was a friend of Jean de Garenceières, who died at Agincourt in 1415, and that in his French poetry he imitated some of the young poet's work, as well as that of Oton de Grandson.¹²³ Grandson's "Complainte de Saint

¹¹⁹ See *Le Poète et la prince*, 286, where he says that Charles received Chartier's poems by 1431. In "Création poétique" (207-8) he compares Charles's Ballade XXVI with a rondeau by Chartier (Piaget, 56; see also Hoffman, 50-52). The unique manuscript of the poems of Garenceières contains works by both Chartier and Charles (Laidlaw, 23).

¹²⁰ See, e.g., Sabatier, 328. Steele suggested (see below) that Charles in turn influenced Chartier's translator, Richard Roos.

¹²¹ *Lyric Poetry*, 63-64. Nigel Wilkins mentions in passing that the word is used by Machaut, but, he says, the duke "takes the theme and exploits it in far greater depth than any of his predecessors. *Nonchaloir* is a departure from traditional courtliness, and it is the key attitude in the poems of Charles d'Orléans' maturity" (*Ballades*, 141).

¹²² Wimsatt discusses the relationship of a number of "poems of complaint and comfort" including *Le Songe vert* and Grandson's complaints, in his book *Chaucer and the French Love Poets*, chapter 8. For the text of the poem, see Constans. The taking of a new love by a bereaved lover is not very unusual in French literature. Grandson's bereaved persona in his "Complainte de Saint Valentin," for instance, finds a new love who closely resembles the lady he has lost to death.

¹²³ Pierre Champion points to both relations in *Vie*, 244-45. For details of the personal and the literary relationship between Charles and Jean, see Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, 279; Fox, *Lyric Poetry*, 66-69; and the authoritative dissertation of Y.A. Neal, esp. 195-215. For the work of Grandson (or Gra[u]nson), see Piaget. All of these scholars discuss the relation of other poets' works to Charles's French poetry, but not to his English. Charles had already written poetry in

Valentin” not only contains the idea of the choosing of sweethearts on Valentine’s Day, but tells of a bereaved lover who refuses to follow the dictates of the God of Love to choose a new lady, arguing that he should be left to his grief.¹²⁴ His dolorous “Livre Messire Ode,” a complex work in mixed forms, even contains a pseudo-document of the kind Charles was so fond of.¹²⁵

ITALIAN AND LATIN: All his life Charles, duc d’Asti, was acquainted with “things Italian.” His mother, Valentina Visconti, who came from Milan to marry the dashing prince Louis of Orleans, was a cultured woman.¹²⁶ She brought with her as part of her dowry the lands of Asti, lands Charles was not to visit until after his return from captivity in England, in 1448. Christine de Pizan was welcomed at the court of Louis and Valentina. In later years, Charles’s secretary, Antonio d’Asti (Astesano), a Lombard who lived at Blois from 1461 to 1463, translated Charles’s French poetry into Latin.¹²⁷ The duke owned the works of a number of Italian authors, though none of them apparently in Italian. Among the Latin works he owned were Boccaccio’s *De Casibus* (two copies, at least one inherited from his father) and *De Mulieribus claris* (two copies), and Petrarch’s *Epistole*. He owned another unnamed work by Petrarch in a French translation,¹²⁸ as well as *Le Trésor* by Brunetto Latini (two copies, one of which he inherited from his father).

The only Italian Charles used in his poetry, however, is in *Rondeau CCLVI*, a macaronic lyric in French and Italian, of which Champion

French before Agincourt (see below, “Order of Composition”).

¹²⁴ When Love shows him a beautiful lady, he immediately capitulates. It is his arguments for resisting the new love, however, which are most evocative of our narrator’s presentation of his petition before the *parlement* of Love (see Piaget, 183–93; on the linking of the work of Grandson and Charles by a contemporary, Martin Le Franc, see 144–45).

¹²⁵ See 1548n. Piaget describes Grandson’s “Livre” as a poem of “2465 vers octosyllabes rimant deux à deux, dans lesquels sont intercalées de nombreuses pièces: ballades, chansons, complaintes, débat du Coeur et du Corps, lettres en prose et en vers” (143–44); the detailed summary that follows reveals a close relationship between the images and ideas of the two young poets (144–53).

¹²⁶ An inventory of her books made in 1388 can be found in Champion, *La Librairie*, lxix–lxxi. Fox discerned no Italian influence on Charles’s poetry via Valentina and makes the further claim that she was not “a great reader” (*Lyric Poetry*, 5–6).

¹²⁷ For more detail, see Champion, *Poésies*, xii–xv.

¹²⁸ An inventory of 1455 includes payment to one Bertran Richart “pour escrire le livre de François Petrac, en francoys, pour MdS” (Laborde, 6776).

says "la pièce est farcie dans le dialecte d'Asti."¹²⁹ In his discussion of Italian influence on the poet, John Fox says that the time was not right in northern France for poets to adopt Italian humanism or to imitate the poetry it produced.¹³⁰ As earlier scholars have noted, Charles's poetry looks backward rather than forward in theme, form, and style; his innovations are technical and linguistic, and involve subtle sophistication rather than avant-garde leaps.

Charles composed two works and a few lyrics in Latin (see above, "Works"). Although it is not possible to say in which language Charles read Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, he clearly knew it well. He owned at least seven copies, in Latin and French (at least two of them glossed—one by Nicholas Trivet), of which he had two with him in England.¹³¹ His knowledge of the work is evident throughout *Fortunes Stablines*, though specific borrowings are difficult to pinpoint.¹³² Likewise, he surely knew the *Aeneid*, whether through the Latin or the French (see below, "Setting"). He owned two copies of the poem (at least one in Latin), as well as two other manuscripts which included works by Virgil.¹³³ The meeting of the narrator with Venus echoes Aeneas's encounter with his mother. Like Aeneas, the narrator does not recognize Venus, who has come to put an end to his unhappiness by introducing him into the good graces of a lady.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ *Poésies*, 588.

¹³⁰ *Lyric Poetry*, 49. See also Champion, *Vie*, xi; Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, 618; Douglas Kelly, 222 (Cocco is of another opinion, as is Foffano). The matter is one of no great import to this work, for whatever contact he had with Italian humanism and poetry must have taken place for the most part after his release from captivity in 1440, when the English poems had already been written.

¹³¹ Champion, *La Librairie*, 21–22, 26–27.

¹³² Except perhaps for 4869: "Remembre must ye that ye ar a man." On the relationship of the *Consolation* to *Fortunes Stablines*, see Goodrich, *Themes* (190–92), who injects a good deal of interpretation into her comparisons, and Douglas Kelly (discussing the French poems, 123–37).

¹³³ Champion, *La Librairie*, 112–14. Goodrich (*Themes*, 190) states that "Champion found that the poet took home to France three copies of the *Aeneid*" (citing *La Librairie*), but no works by Virgil are listed in the 1440 inventory (see *La Librairie*, xxv–xxix), though the four I have mentioned all appear in the 1417 inventory.

Although Charles's mother, Valentina, owned manuscripts in German and he mentions *Alemant* in a list of languages in Chanson LXXX, there is no evidence that he knew or read German himself (see Planche, 113).

¹³⁴ We know from Chaucer's *House of Fame* (219ff.) and his legend of Dido that the Dido and Aeneas sub-plot was well known and was considered appropriate material for late medieval love poetry (see *House of Fame* discussion above and Goodrich, *Themes*, 188–90).

Themes and Conventions

SETTING: Unlike Chaucer and his followers, who seemed to revel in physical descriptions, especially of interiors, Charles employs a variety of settings without describing any of them in any detail. Even a superficial comparison of Charles's poetry with that of Chaucer makes clear that Charles is no lover of nature. He includes no Chaucerian catalogues of trees or birds; he is emphatically a poet of the great indoors.¹³⁵ In the lost opening allegory (which can be reconstructed by referring to its French counterpart), the prospective lover meets Dame Jenesse and is taken immediately to "un manoir / Trop bel assis et plaisant a veoir" (103-4), which he enters but makes no attempt to describe further.

At the end of the first ballade sequence the God of Love holds a parliament where, although no buildings or rooms are described, the setting is clearly the hall of a lord.¹³⁶ The lover retires to the Castle of No Care, a day's ride from the God of Love's court, which is also referred to as a manor but is not described. While in retirement, the narrator gives a banquet for his fellow lovers, during which the food and ritual are detailed, but the setting is left largely to the reader's imagination. We are, again, in the hall of a lord's castle.

The second dream vision was written when the poet was in a different frame of mind or subject to different influences, or perhaps it was simply composed much later than much of the rest of the work. Suddenly, full, Chaucerian-style description of the setting pours from the poet's pen.¹³⁷ The dreamer falls asleep on a turfed bench (as Chaucer's narrator in the *Legend of Good Women* does) built on a shiny, glass-like cliff overlooking the sea. Where the rough waves lap the shore, the lover sees a lady floating ashore on the waves, and the poet begins his description of Venus. This setting, reminiscent of the story

¹³⁵ Poirion discusses Charles's avoidance of the pastoral themes popular in his day (*Le Poète et le prince*, 488-94); Charles "situe le plus souvent son espace poétique dans le décor familier de sa chambre, avec un mobilier sommaire fait de coffres et d'armoires" (*Ro.* 18), for "C'est un paysage artificiel que l'on préfère, malgré tout, au paysage naturel" (490). It is the flowers embroidered on Fortune's mantle, not those in the field, that he describes with such obvious enjoyment.

¹³⁶ On the Court of Love as a court of law and a feudal court (and indeed a feudal court *is* a court of law), see Stevens, 164-67.

¹³⁷ On settings in late medieval poetry, see Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter. *Landscapes and Seasons*, chap. 6, 176-77 (in which they mention the limitations of the "landscapes" of Charles's French poetry).

of Aeneas's encounter with his mother on the Libyan beach at the outskirts of Carthage, may have come to the poet through his reading of Virgil, or it may have been suggested to him by Chaucer's account in his *House of Fame*. The scene may also have been shaped by the landscape Geoffrey finds himself in at the end of Book I: a sandy desert "withouten toun, or hous, or tree, / Or bush, or grass, or eryd lond / . . . / Ne no maner creature / That ys yformed be Nature," in other words, beyond the bounds of civilization. Geoffrey's response to this prospect is, "O Crist . . . that art in blysse, / Fro fantome and illusion / Me save!" (484-94); the strange barrenness of Charles's sandy landscape is reinforced by Venus's cry, "Allas that ther nar ny of hir sum boch!" (5089).¹³⁸

Charles's setting is decidedly not a desert, however, but a seashore. What makes this setting remarkable is that, though common enough in romance, it is virtually unique among late medieval dream-vision settings. Temples, prisons, gardens, yes, but a scene set on a wild seashore is contrary to all that medieval love allegories and dream visions have prepared us for.¹³⁹ The sea is, of course, a common enough *image*, for instance, in Chaucer's *Troilus*, but Charles has expanded that image and amplified its implications for his dream vision. The sea is indeed the Sea of Fortune (as it is in so many late medieval works), but also the sea of worldly delights associated with Venus.¹⁴⁰ The course of the love it heralds is surely hinted at by the fact that the setting in which the lover encounters Venus is no man-made one.

After awakening from his dream, the narrator wanders into "a grene

¹³⁸ See Benson, *Riverside Chaucer*, HF 482-88n; also Patch, "Chaucer's Desert." Deschamps describes the desert in his *Lay du desert d'amour* as a place where "il n'a fueille, ne boys vert, / Herbe, fleur, fruit n'autre verdure; / Tout chant d'oiseil y ert desert" (De Queux de Saint-Hilaire, 236-40).

¹³⁹ Compare, for instance, the seashore as Chaucer represents it in the *FkIT*: far from being a setting for a love vision, it is a horrible and dangerous place, hostile to human life and limb. I am grateful to Sylvia Horowitz for drawing my attention to this contrast. A later parallel to this seashore scene is to be found in the prologue of Sir David Lindsay's *The Dream* (late 1520s), in which the narrator, who has spent the night in *heyu thoct*, goes to the seashore "pensyue in hart," with pen and paper "to Register, in ryme, / Sum mery mater of Antiquite." There he falls asleep in a cave "in the Roche" overlooking the shore of a sea which clearly represents *Instabilitye* (57-147). I am grateful to A. C. Spearing for bringing this poem to my attention. On Lydgate's and Charles's views of landscapes, see also Pearsall and Salter, 176-77, 193.

¹⁴⁰ See Twycross, 42-43 and n. 90; Lydgate, *Pilgrimage*, 508-21; Patch, *Fortuna*, 90-98, 101-7.

wood shade” where he encounters a group of noble ladies and gentlemen playing a game of Post and Pillar “vpon a launde” where the grass is “soft, smothe & fayre” (5198–99). Again, he finds his lady, not in a setting made (or organized) by man, such as an enclosed garden (the usual *locus amoenus* of courtly play), but in the wildwood.¹⁴¹ Although in the romance tradition “the rules and forms of normal society are suspended or defied” in the forest, that is certainly not the case here.¹⁴² The order of the game, with its elaborate rules spelled out (and itself a metaphor for the love game to follow), must have presented the medieval reader with a piquant contrast to the “natural” setting—and boded ill for the commencement of a new relationship.

THE HEART: After the lover, the heart is perhaps the most important character in this work, at times occupying more of his attention than even the lady does.¹⁴³ Although heart imagery is traditional and ubiquitous in late medieval love poetry, two aspects of Charles’s use of the heart are unusual. The idea of giving one’s heart to the beloved is unremarkable, but the graphic way in which the poet expresses the pain of living without a heart returns the process to its imaginative beginnings. Charles brings the metaphor to life by returning the physicality of the transaction to his poems:

... y haue leyd this many yere agoo
 Without an hert ...
 Hit nys but evene of loue myracle, lo.

Who ist may lyue or longe goon on his feet
 Without an hert, as y my lijf haue lad?
 Now certis noon, that dar y yow bihet
 In such turment as y haue ben bistad. (797–803)

¹⁴¹ This setting provides a marked contrast to that of the game in the Book of Hours discussed in the “Courtly Occupations” section, below. There the players are clearly outside the city, which appears in the background, but within a low, hedged area (a kind of playing field) around which noble spectators sit in small groups. The action of Clanvowe’s *Cuckoo and the Nightingale* takes place on a *launde* within a *wode*, but it is birds the lover finds there, not courtly games. Chaucer’s Black Knight laments in a symbolic sort of forest that, like Charles’s, is conspicuously lacking in any kind of stream. On the classical backgrounds to medieval landscapes, see Curtius, “The Grove” and “The Pleasance,” 194–200.

¹⁴² Hanning, 158.

¹⁴³ The word *hert* occurs 337 times in the work. For a summary of the imagery of the heart in the French and in the English poems, see Purcell, 21–22.

When the God of Love returns his heart, which is on the verge of death, he places it in his "bosom" (Ballade 78), an action which we are free to read as, in effect, putting it "in a safe place" but also actually replacing it in his chest,¹⁴⁴ an action which Chaucer chooses to distance from his audience by placing it in Criseyde's dream (*T&C* 2.925-31).

What is more, the heart is an important character "qui ressemble au poète comme un frère," especially in the first ballade and roundel sequences.¹⁴⁵ Early on, in Ballade 6, the lover laments to the lady, "myn hert and y thus haue ye brost atwayne," and indeed this describes perfectly the situation which informs most of the work. The lover argues with, cajoles, encourages, lectures, and even censures his heart. In their interactions the lover is often the rational, dependable party; the heart, the rash or emotional one (see Ballade 43, Roundels 71, 72, 87, for example). The heart is also often the suffering one, defenseless and near death because of the unkindness of the lady.¹⁴⁶ The lover holds frequent conversations with his heart, at times lamenting its collusion with his eyes against him (or the heart's victimization by the lady's eyes). Most important from the literary point of view, the lover and his heart are often at odds. They argue, dismiss, or disbelieve one another—in fact create the impression of two quarreling friends rather than of two parts of a single personality.

Though the conflict between the lover and his heart and eyes is common in courtly poetry, their exchanges owe something ultimately to the medieval genre of the debate, especially those involving two parts of the same human being: body and soul, heart and eye, etc. One notable difference in the structure of the "debate" in Charles's works from that of many other debates is that the narrator is one of those debating rather than an observer who can learn from the action played out for his benefit.¹⁴⁷ Although no formal debates are staged in *For-*

¹⁴⁴ See Leyerle, "Heart and Chain," 140-41. This is not to say that all the heart imagery in these poems is to be read in this way. On the contrary, as Richard Firth Green has demonstrated, at least some of these lyrics are occasional and probably refer to the exchange of love tokens in the form of hearts ("Hearts, Minds"). Mason goes further, describing the whole work as "part of a courtly ceremonial" (164).

¹⁴⁵ Champion, *Vie*, 646.

¹⁴⁶ Poirion says of the heart, "Alors que chez un philosophe comme Brunet Latin le coeur est surtout le siège de la volonté et de l'intelligence, chez notre poète c'est essentiellement le siège du sentiment" (*Le Lexique*, s.v. *coeur*).

¹⁴⁷ These debates always address the question, either directly or indirectly, of

tunes Stabilnes, oppositions between Love and Elde, and the flower and the leaf both owe something to this tradition; in addition, the dialogue between Venus and the lover mirrors the discussions between many lovers and their less starry-eyed friends and confidants, which in turn owe something to the debate genre. Venus's Boethian approach to the lover's problem suggests that the poet has woven the "advice of a practical friend" thread through an "advice of a supernatural figure" fabric—two strands of the debate tradition.

LOVESICKNESS: Charles seems to offer a serious representation of lovesickness and its treatment. When his lady dies, the lover withdraws from the service of Love (both legally and physically) to the Castle of No Care; the lover is under a doctor's care in Ballade 71; in Ballade 82, the plaster of No Care applied by Time Past has lain against the lover's heart for so long and so softly that he says he is healed of the "disease" called "Lovis Malady."

His retreat, too, sounds as if it contains many of the proper elements to aid in his cure: retirement, good company, food and drink, and song (poetry)—in a word, distraction.¹⁴⁸ At No Care he should occupy himself with dispassionate, social amusement if he wants to be cured, as he claims, but on no account should he occupy himself with thoughts of love. *Venus otia amat* (*Remedia Amoris* 143). No Care proves not to be a place of no care, however; it is rather a place to indulge in fantasies of love that only aggravate his condition. Though

which of the two is and which ought to be in control of the other. For a summary of the medieval works and earlier scholarship on the subject, see Hammond, "Eye and Heart," and Hanford (see also Bossy). Robert Deschaux, the editor of the French poem (a Middle English translation of a French debate poem by Michault Taillevent), believes that its author was influenced by Charles (42). See also the "Complainte du Corps et du Coeur" that forms part of Grandson's *Livre messire Ode*. The work closes with a series of fixed-form lyrics and verse in other forms which resemble Charles's ballades in tone and subject matter (Piaget, 441ff.). Of course, many courtly poets before Charles employed the same imagery, including Dante in his *Vita Nuova*.

Charles's mother, Valentina, owned a *Traité de l'ame et du coeur* (Champion, *La Librairie*, xvii), conceivably a version of the debate between "The Part Sensitive & the Part Intellective" (see Conlee). I am grateful to Elaine Beretz for suggesting the relevance of this tradition to Charles's poetry. Two useful books on the medieval debate, both with bibliographies, are those by Vogel and Reed, who refer at a number of points to this work (see also Utley, "Dialogues, Debates").

¹⁴⁸ See Wack 150, 190–91, 234–35 (also her quotation from Gottfried von Strassburg, 64), and Douglas Kelly, 239.

released from Love's service, immediately following his letter of gratitude to the God of Love, the lover admits that his eyes are still looking everywhere for "plesaunt bewte," however much he tries to restrain them (Ballade 82). Ensnared in his retreat, he claims to be completely free of the pangs of love—in fact he sleeps very well (Roundel 1), yet the very next poem opens,

Now holde him silf from loue, let se þat may,
For as for me y may kepe me no more.
I nede must loue for any greef or sore. (3152–54)

And so it goes. He swears off love, then falls at the first provocation. The medieval reader would have no doubt that the cure is a failure, nor would he be at all surprised by the lover's reinvolvement in love. Proof that the cure has not worked is provided both by the content of the final roundel and by the state of mind of the narrator after his banquet is over (4638–44).¹⁴⁹ After his long, doleful account to Venus of his hermit's life and their argument over the merits of faithfulness to a dead lady, Venus remarks,

And where ye cast alway from loue withdrawe,
A feith, y trowe youre labour vaylith not,

and indeed it does not, for the lover is drawn into a new love affair that is in many ways more painful and less rewarding than the first.¹⁵⁰

Courtly Occupations

MAYING, THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF: All of the occupations here presented are part of the "game of love" as described so intriguingly by John Stevens.¹⁵¹ Stevens discusses the role many of the individual lyrics in this work probably played, how they might have fit in to the social life in which the duke found himself, and, as a result of both, how we might most properly respond to the work, both in its parts and as a whole. Charles of Orleans and Chaucer provide a substantial

¹⁴⁹ See Glending Olson, *Literature as Recreation*, 186–87.

¹⁵⁰ Gower's lover has an easier (or at least a simpler) time of it. When age approaches and he realizes that he is no longer fit to play the role of lover, he withdraws once and for all. Charles's lover talks about approaching age—and does so very graphically—but cannot escape what would seem to be a hopeless situation.

¹⁵¹ See esp. chap. 9. For a discussion with a different focus, see Pearsall, *Flour and the Leafe*, introduction.

amount of material for his arguments, which are worth careful consideration.

Ballade 48 refers to the custom of young people "maying" or riding out into the countryside in companies to gather may (hawthorn) blossoms. The lover says to his heart, "Lete vs at wode go geder may in fere / To holde of oure oold custome the manere" (1692-93). Unfortunately, the lover and his heart will not share the company of the lady, as the day requires, for Daunger has caused her to be absent.¹⁵² References to the month of May, generally in the opening lines of ballades, punctuate the first ballade sequence, but the lover can never join in the celebration of the season of love. In Ballade 17, for instance, the narrator is miserable because of his lack of success; in Ballade 53 the day is stormy, but he trusts the God of Love will "amend" it; in Ballades 65 and 66 the lover laments the death of his lady (see also Ballades 42 and 70).

In Ballade 65, the first of May is a day the lover happens to be spending in a gracious company who decide, "forto expelle alle thought heue," to play the game of choosing between the flower and the leaf.¹⁵³ This lyric and the one that follows it may have been composed for an occasion and later incorporated in the growing collection. The lover chooses the leaf, since his "flower" has died, but in the following poem (Ballade 66) the "flower" appears to him while he is between sleep and waking, chiding him for his lack of constancy to her memory. When the "flower" takes him to task, he replies that he will always honor her above all others. He defends himself from her "cruelte" in accusing him of faithlessness, saying "Me thynke y haue deservid not wherfore." His rhetoric and his defense create an odd effect that may leave the reader wondering about his usually abject devotion to his lady and his profession of boundless grief at her death (see 2233n).

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY: Charles makes use of Valentine's Day as a method of "dating" a document, as a day set aside for love and mat-

¹⁵² Maying is no mere rustic pursuit; Mason describes Henry VIII's idea of an appropriate celebration (21-22). His claim that Charles wrote his May poems out of Chaucer's *KnT* (1500-1512) is probably not justified (165). For an extravagant depiction of such a maying procession, see the calendar page for May in the duke of Berry's *Très Riches Heures* (see also Mitchell, and Hussey, 112, where the children of Venus include an elegant young man, his head wreathed with may). Representations of young noble people carrying or wearing hawthorn branches are common in medieval manuscripts. For Malory's account of Queen Gwenyver's maying, see Stevens (187).

¹⁵³ See Pearsall, *Floure and the Leafe*, and Marsh.

ing, and as a form of address. The lover's patent from the God of Love is dated "the day of seynt Valentyn þe martere" (53), obviously an appropriate day on which to enter the service of Love.¹⁵⁴ In the second ballade sequence, he refers once to the lady as "Fayre valentyne" (5488) but makes no reference to the day (see also Rondeau VI).¹⁵⁵ Ballade 72, one of the poems mourning the death of the lady, takes place on Valentine's Day, though it is clearly the day on which birds and men are supposed to choose their mates. Though the lover is lying in his bed "of newous thought," the ballade does not actually contain a dream, as we might expect, nor does the joyous day and the choosing of avian mates presage any kind of new beginning for the lover, who, awakened by birdsong, congratulates the birds on their good fortune and laments the loss of his "maystres." He concludes:

Als wele is him this day that hath him kaught
 A valentyne that louyth him, as y gesse,
 Whereas this comfort sole y here me dresse
 Vpon my bed so hard of Noyous Thought.

(2479-82)¹⁵⁶

CHESS AND TABLES: Two board games, both of which were often related to love or fortune by medieval poets, figure prominently in

¹⁵⁴ The French version is dated in the same way.

¹⁵⁵ Charles seems to have written Valentine poems more regularly after his return to France (Champion, *Poésies*, xxvi). "Charles of Orleans, even more than Lydgate, established *Valentinus in hieme* as the patron of love, leaving the *Valentinus vernalis* of Chaucer and Grandson in the cold" (Kelly, *St. Valentine*, 152): in his French poems Valentine's Day falls in Lent (in Rondeaux CLXI and CCXLVII), on Mardi Gras (in CCCLV), and on Ash Wednesday (in CLXII); for the texts see Champion, *Poésies*, 2:382-83, 431-32. These references do not exhaust the list of Charles's French poems on the subject.

For a survey of literary references, see Oruch (553-62); Henry Ansgar Kelly also discusses Charles's references to Valentine's Day (146-52). Champion's use of such references to May or Valentine's Day to date their composition is highly conjectural (1:xxiii-xxvi).

¹⁵⁶ Rondeau III presents an even more miniaturized version of this situation. There, however, instead of resigning himself to tossing and turning in his bed of "Noyous Thought," the lover receives treatment from his physician, "Non-chaloir."

See also *Le Songe Vert*; Gower's *Ballades* 34 and 35 (*Cinkante Ballades*, 365-66); Lydgate's "Flour of Curtesye" (Skeat, *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, 266-74, esp. 1-91). Grandson also uses the occasion to lament, not to rejoice (Piaget, 183-93 and 481-86).

Charles's poetry. He was interested in chess as more than just a literary image, however.¹⁵⁷ In 1457 he paid the expenses of a professional chess player, one Juvenal Negro, for playing against him during his stay at Blois.¹⁵⁸ He owned a number of chess boards, one of which he brought back home from England. His third wife, Marie of Cleves, and various members of his household are known to have played chess. He inherited his love of the game from his father, who bet (and lost) large sums of money on it.¹⁵⁹ One luxurious volume that he owned and annotated—which contained, among other things, a treatise by the Lombard Nicolas de Nicolai on endgames (B.N. MS. lat. 10286)—includes, next to the first illustration of a board in play, the arms of France and England; above another, a battle scene; and below the same; a game between a lady and a gentleman. As a game of war and at the same time a game of love, chess must have resonated on many levels for Charles.¹⁶⁰ The game of chess was an old and popular metaphor in courtly poetry. It is not surprising, therefore, to hear the narrator report that he has played chess against “false Daungere,” aided by Fortune, and has lost his lady (another name for a queen), for whom he cared more than his knight, bishop, pawn, or rook (Ballade 61). He will be checkmated, he says, unless he can get a pawn “queened.” He is so confused by Fortune's play that he does not know where to move his pieces.

By all accounts the modern power of the queen did not exist before the third quarter of the fifteenth century.¹⁶¹ Before that time, the

¹⁵⁷ This is one instance in which any similarities between Charles's poem and Chaucer's *BD* must be weighed against our knowledge that Charles himself had a lifelong interest in the game. On medieval chess, see Murray, *History of Chess*, esp. chap. 9: “Chess in Mediaeval Literature,” and Strutt, 250–55.

¹⁵⁸ This amounted to forty *livres tournois* (Champion, *Joueur d'échecs*, 1). The information on Charles's games is taken from this slim volume of sixteen pages, which contains a plate showing Charles's annotations (on which see also Legrain).

¹⁵⁹ On wagering on chess games, see Murray, 474–75. The word *chaunsis* in 5028 may be a dicing term.

¹⁶⁰ The same volume includes the *Livre des Echecs Moralises* in a French translation of the Latin, by the Italian Jacobus de Cessolis.

¹⁶¹ Eales finds “certain evidence” of the new game only “by the 1490s” (71) by discounting a 1471–75 dating of the “Göttingen Manuscript” (73–74), a collection of openings and problems apparently derived from another “larger collection” (74). “Medieval chess” had apparently all but disappeared by the very early sixteenth century (75–76). He finally settles on “a target date between 1470 and 1490 for the innovation . . . , though it remains possible that the new game was devised earlier and ‘lay dormant’ for a while before it began to achieve popularity” (76). I am grateful to Gerard Dullea for bringing this book to my attention and sharing some of his considerable knowledge of chess with me.

queen could move only one space at a time and only diagonally. In the new game, the queen became the strongest piece on the board.¹⁶² Another change in the rules of the (European) game is that when the pawn reached the far end of the board and was "queened," it also acquired vastly increased powers.¹⁶³ In addition, "soon after 1600" it became usual to warn the opponent that one was about to capture his queen by saying "Guard" or "Queen."¹⁶⁴

Curiously, the allegory of Charles's ballade emphasizes precisely these points about the game: "In my lady lay all my sikernes," the lover says, for "all my warde that kepte my lady dere."¹⁶⁵ The word *warde* (Fr *gardes*) evokes the rhetoric of the new game (it refers directly to the queen's role of protecting the king on the board, the narrator-lover being the king in this case). He does not know how he can endure the loss of his lady, "without so be y make a lady new," that is, unless he can get a pawn queened. In light of these curious details in his use of the chess metaphor, it is difficult to believe that he was completely unaware of the rules of the new game.¹⁶⁶ A closer look at the *Book of the Duchess* in light of this historical puzzle might also be rewarding.

¹⁶² Formerly, the rook was the strongest piece. At about the same time, the new game takes its name from the queen (because of her new powers) in a number of European languages: It *scacchi de la donna*, Sp *axedrez de la dama*, Fr *eschés de la dame* (Murray, *History of Chess*, 776; see also 503–5), or even *eschés de la dame enragée* (Eales, 72). The Middle English equivalent is of course *lady* (Murray, 426–28). Murray's statement that the use of *lady* "argues an ignorance of chess on the part of the translator" certainly cannot be said of Charles of Orleans, as Murray admits (431). His comment on the use by both Chaucer and Charles of the chess metaphor is that it is unreal and unconvincing (752). Murray finds Charles's indebtedness to Chaucer's chess references in *BD* (652–87) "obvious," but he does not explain why he finds Charles's use of the chess metaphor unconvincing. Given Charles's interest and expertise, I suspect that Murray has missed something.

¹⁶³ See Murray, 776–77.

¹⁶⁴ *Dame or Gardez or Gardez la reine*, says Murray, in Germany and Holland (388–89; he denies that the call originated in France). Eales cites an instance of saying "Check and guard" (when both the king and queen were attacked) in a poem by Surrey, who died in 1547 (76).

¹⁶⁵ Ballade 61; not a likely statement if, as Eales writes, the queen "was a rather weak piece, weaker even than the king" (72); he goes on to say that "the reformed queen combined in one piece the moves of rook and (modern) bishop, becoming at once the strongest unit on the board."

¹⁶⁶ The only difficulty is the referent of "that" in 2123, which seems to accord the knight (rather than the rook) more power than the queen. The French version reads: "Je n'avoie pion, ne chevalier, / Auffin, ne rocq qui peussent ma querelle / Si bien aidier" (Ballade LVIII).

The game of *tables* took many forms in the Middle Ages, as it does today, and it seems to have taken second place only to chess in Charles's interest in and love of games.¹⁶⁷ The second treatise in the volume of works on games just mentioned (B.N. MS. lat. 10286) concerns *tables*. Charles owned a number of *tabliers* including an Italian marble board given to him by his mother.¹⁶⁸ Charles's persona, too, plays "the short games of tablis" under the tutelage of Love in Ballade 46. He has a hard time of it, however, because Fortune turns the dice against him. In the envoy, the lover calls on Love to teach him some way of escaping "this iupart [problem, difficult move] here" and winning the game.¹⁶⁹ The poet mentions another form of tables in the second dream vision; remembering his dead lady, the lover recalls playing with her "at the lorche" (4830-31; rhyme: "chirche") in a window seat.¹⁷⁰

POST AND PILLAR: After his meeting with Venus and Fortune, the narrator encounters his new lady engaged with other "ladies and ther wymmen" in a game of Post and Pillar "with many a squyer and many a knyght" in a forest clearing. Post and Pillar is a chasing game, similar to "Twos and Threes."¹⁷¹ In French it was called *le jeu des fagots* (or *le tiers*).¹⁷² Couples (a "post" and a "pillar" or, taken together, a *fagot*)

¹⁶⁷ He seems to have enjoyed these games even while travelling by boat on the Loire (Champion, *Joueur d'échecs*, 1, 7). In fact "tables" (from L. *tabula*, "tiles" or playing pieces) was the generic name for a game with a great many variations, much as "cards" is today. Backgammon is one outgrowth of the early game, as is French *trictrac* (Murray, "The Medieval Game of Tables," 58; see also Strutt, 248-49).

¹⁶⁸ For a description of two *tabliers* and a box of playing pieces for chess and tables owned by Valentina, see Graves (nn. 91, 93, 801, 66, 140-41).

¹⁶⁹ For a discussion of the game played, see 1629-57n.

¹⁷⁰ *Lorche* (F. *lourche*) survives today in the expression "to leave in the lurch."

¹⁷¹ The game is also known as "Round Tag," "Faggots," or (in the version I played as a child) "Three Deep" (Opie and Opie, 82-84). The game of Post and Pillar as described by Charles would not seem to have given rise to the expression "from pillar to post" (an expression abundantly attested in the *OED*, s.v. *pillar*, sb. 11; as well as by Whiting and Whiting, and by Tilley). The reference to being made to dance "from pillar to post" in Lydgate's *Assembly of Gods* (1147) makes clear that the modern meaning of the phrase was already in use in the fifteenth century; that it has no direct relation to the game is perhaps suggested by the reversed order ("post" is made to rhyme with "toss'd" in various texts). Iona Opie has suggested that the name of the game derives from the popular expression rather than the other way around (private correspondence).

¹⁷² The French game is remarkably similar to the one Charles describes, even

stand in a well-spaced circle.¹⁷³ The one who is "it," who must stay outside the circle, chases another player, who may dodge in and out of the circle. If the one being chased is caught, the chase reverses; if he wishes to rest, he joins one of the couples, forcing that man to flee.

The narrator's friend asks that the players make room for the new player (who will, of course, be "it"), presumably because they have crowded around the player with the unfortunately torn hose (5221-22). The narrator then quickly tags "on . . . of the rowt" (that is, the man he is chasing) during his first turn. At this point, the chase reverses, and the fugitive dodges away from his pursuer ("the corse . . . droue me here & there"), making as straight as possible for the new lady. Once there, he can talk to her, necessarily being at some distance from the next pair of players. In fact this is said to be one of the delights of the game: the combination of fresh air, excitement, and an opportunity to flirt (engage in "courtly speech") in private with a series of partners.¹⁷⁴

At a certain point, the lady realizes that the two running players are headed their way (5317), and their tête-à-tête is interrupted as the player who is being chased takes refuge with them, forcing the narrator to leave her company. It was unthinkable that the ladies would be involved in such strenuous and potentially undignified exercise; they were spaced out and stationary, and all the running was done by the men.

The illustration of the game in the Book of Hours of Adelaïde of Savoy confirms this, showing two male runners.¹⁷⁵ Within a low, square enclosure (emphasizing the contrived and civilized nature of the activity), three lords and three ladies stand in couples at some distance from one another, each of the ladies with her arms around the gentleman standing in front of her. A group of stylishly dressed young people, sitting and standing outside the low wall, look on. A walled city in the background implies that this was a "country" activity (accentu-

in a form recorded as late as the nineteenth century by Legay.

¹⁷³ In the post-medieval French terminology, *Cavalier* and *Dame* together comprise a *fagot*. Charles's narrator can immediately see that this is the game that they are playing because the couples have their arms around each other (they *gan eche othir fast in armys hold*), as in the Chantilly manuscript (see below).

¹⁷⁴ "Autant il est doux lorsqu'on fait *Fagot* de se trouver réuni à une personne que l'on aime, autant il est piquant de s'en voir séparé, souvent à dessein, par un jaloux qui vient se parler brusquement devant vous, et qui vous force l'un ou l'autre à prendre la fuite" (Legay).

¹⁷⁵ Chantilly, Musée Condé MS. 76 (formerly 1362), fol. 46v (see p. 334). The mid-fifteenth century depiction of the game of Post and Pillar illustrates the month of April (see Bouissounouse; Plummer, 42).

ated by the one little tree which stands just inside the enclosure and a rough rock just outside it) which took place in a constructed area just outside the bustling city—quite unlike the isolated setting in *Fortunes Stabilnes*. Two young men (the one who is “it” and the one who is chased) feint around one of the three couples. The illuminator of this manuscript (the Master of Adélaïde de Savoie) was “apparently trained in the Loire region,” a fact which would at least suggest that this game was one Charles knew from his childhood,¹⁷⁶ though he may well have taken part in such courtly games during his stay in England.

Allegorical Figures

VENUS: Venus is mentioned as accompanying the God of Love and co-issuing documents, but she does not actually appear (except briefly in Ballade 70) until after the narrator has retired from the service of Love, at which point she appears in a vision to attempt to interest the ex-lover in a new love affair. The balance of the poem between the powers of the God of Love and his mother is thus similar to that in the *Roman de la rose*, in which Venus makes a dramatic entrance near the end of the work to effect what the God of Love alone seems unable (or unwilling) to bring to a conclusion. The contrast between a grand and dignified God of Love and a more earthy Venus may also point to the *Rose* tradition.¹⁷⁷ In his *Fonteinne amoureuse*, Machaut creates a goddess with a scornful attitude toward the lover and enough wit to match that of Charles’s. Her undisguised pleasure at the sight of Priapus (1675–84) and her biased recounting of the Judgment of Paris (1715–2144) show her to be an earthy, manipulative schemer. She upbraids the lover disdainfully for his sloth (or ignorance?) and then follows up with a gentle, coaxing, motherly speech of enticement which is entirely successful.¹⁷⁸

Charles’s Venus appears much like Chaucer’s goddess in the *Parliament of Fowls*, clothed only in a “kercher of Plesaunce” (a refinement of Chaucer’s “coverchef of Valence”). Unlike this Venus in the temple

¹⁷⁶ Plummer, 42.

¹⁷⁷ Douglas Kelly, in discussing the duke’s French poems, refers to Venus as “the source of burning *rage* in Guillaume de Lorris” and to “the rollicking cynicism of the goddess in Jean de Meun” (204), though he finds the Venus figure of Charles’s much shorter French work very different from that of the *Rose*. She is certainly a more fully developed character.

¹⁷⁸ See Hoepffner, lines 2145–62, 2163–93. William Calin has called her “a sprightly, coquettish creature with a sense of humor” (152). N. L. Goodrich’s claim that Charles “associated Venus with his . . . mother,” Valentina (and the God of Love with his father, Louis!), is fanciful (*Themes*, 188–90).

of Priapus, however (and more like the Venus of the *House of Fame* and the *Knight's Tale*), she appears floating on the sea (the Venus of the Marine Triumphs), with doves fluttering in the air above her head (see above, "Setting"). Charles's decision to present Venus in this setting has numerous implications. Her birth from Saturn's genitals, cast into the sea, was a story well known to the writers of courtly literature of the late Middle Ages, and the ocean setting evokes that aspect of the Venus story.¹⁷⁹ Her image is made more ominous by the presence of an owl on her hand. The first modern response to this image ("but that's the bird of Pallas Athena") reflects the Renaissance revival of Greek and Roman iconography; a medieval audience would be more likely to associate the bird with death, darkness, and lasciviousness.¹⁸⁰ At the same time, the owl was used in many medieval representations as a parody of courtliness (in place of a falcon), and may be so intended here.¹⁸¹ The figure of Venus is thus represented at the

¹⁷⁹ See Twycross. The event is described in the *Roman de la rose*, 5533ff., and the castration is depicted in Bodleian Lib. MS., Douce 195, reproduced in Robertson, pl. 3. Lydgate gives a fuller description of the series of events in *Reason and Sensualyte*, 1444ff. His description of the Venus is yet another example of goddess as cheesecake (1563ff.). See also Gower (*CA* 8.2273-76).

¹⁸⁰ An extensive search of material of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance has turned up no more precise "meaning" for the bird. Chaucer refers to owls more than once (*NPT*, 4281-82; *SqT*, 646-50; *PF*, 343; *LGW*, 2253-54; also Braddy, 84-85). Sloth rides a goat, carrying an owl on his wrist, in Gower, *Mirour de l'Omme* (Macaulay, *French Works*, 889-900; see also *CA* 3.585ff. and note). Among French authors, see Philippe de Mézieres (*Le Songe du vieil pelerin*, 108). William Calin says the screech owl chased by the gerfalcon in Machaut's *Le Dit de l'alerion* represents "either vices which have undermined the falcon's personality or, more likely, a vicious, unworthy lover" (*A Poet at the Fountain*, 99). In the desert of Deschamps' *Lay du desert d'amours*, "Le cahuant [*chat-huant*] chante et murmure / Ses chans de mort" (lines 257-58).

It would be no surprise to find an attribute of Venus that suggested *luxurial* lechery (see next note). On the association of the bird with lechery in the work of Bosch, see Bax, 208-13; for an owl in a love garden by Master E. S., see Lehrs, 302, no. 214: Der Liebesgarten mit den Schachspielern. In German folklore, the owl was often associated with love charms, (Bächtoldt-Stäubli, s.v. Eule; see also de Gubernatis, chap. 6). Though many of these works (like the owl of *The Owl and the Nightingale*) would not have been available to Charles, they illustrate that a cluster of negative significances for the owl (not really balanced by positive ones that might in any way be associated with Venus) was widespread.

¹⁸¹ The owl is often associated with apes (thus with lust and foolishness), and many clearly parody courtly figures (see Pearsall, *Nun's Priest's Tale*, 4282n, 190; Rowland, 12; also especially Janson, and Randall). For an owl being flown as a bird of prey, see the marginal illustration in the Rothschild Canticles (Yale, Beinecke Library MS. 404, fol. 134r; Randall, 113.543; Yapp, 130-31).

outset as both a parody of an icon and a figure that bodes ill for the lover.

She contrasts markedly with Age, the only other figure who appears to the lover to give advice, comfort, and aid. Whereas the advice of Age is sound and genuinely helpful (at least in intent), the much stronger advice of Venus, who debates with the lover at far greater length, is designed to plunge him back into the life of misery from which Age had attempted to rescue him. Her sharp-tongued sarcasm sets her apart from other supernatural figures that so commonly appear to ailing lovers in courtly poetry (usually in the Lady Philosophy mould), and her brisk, high-pressure selling techniques force him into a corner from which he can extricate himself only by leaving the vital decision concerning his future up to her. Her solution to his problem is as immediate and efficient as it is far-reaching; she takes him directly to Fortune's wheel.

Charles's goddess, like Machaut's, laughs at the lover, confident that his poor defenses will give way at the mere sight of the proper love-object. Charles, however, even goes so far as to create a character who panics at the thought that she might be seen (and unkindly judged) by others who find her on the shore in a state of undress with a man (5086ff.). Venus's embarrassment at being caught with Mars in Vulcan's net makes sense in the context of the laughter of the gods; Venus's embarrassment at being thought a "loose" woman by mere mortals is quite another matter.¹⁸²

Her function in the dream vision is closely tied to that of Fortune, who appears in the sky while Venus and Charles the narrator are talking. She indeed seems to be partially defined by her close association with Fortune, who descends like a queen in the kind of golden chariot Venus herself sometimes arrives in, though it is drawn by white horses rather than Venus's white doves. Gower's identification of Venus with Fortune may furnish a further piece of evidence that Charles of Orleans knew the *Confessio Amantis*: "Bot sche which kepth the blinde whel, / Venus . . ." (1.2490-91). In the final book, Gower's Venus counsels the aging lover to leave the service of Love, saying, "So goth the fortune of my whiel" (8.2880). These passages might well have provided the raw material for Charles's creation of a garrulous Venus and a dumb Fortune who work in concert to initiate a new love affair. This is not to say that other poets do not mention Venus and

¹⁸² See *RR*, 18077-86 (Dahlberg, 301).

Fortune together, but that the intimate connection Gower presents is particularly striking.¹⁸³

FORTUNE: Robert Steele has declared Charles's description of Fortune "by far the fullest and most detailed in medieval literature."¹⁸⁴ It at once describes an imaginary being with extraordinary supernatural attributes and a magnificently dressed woman of high rank of the early fifteenth century. The description shows a nice—indeed an exceptional—appreciation of the arts of working with textiles and gems and an interest in design, all of which probably points to a more general interest in fashion on the part of the poet. This should come as no surprise; Charles's love of fine clothes is well attested. Fortune's surcoat sprinkled with laughing and weeping eyes, her elaborate mantle, her necklace of whirling dice suggest that the poet not only found the subject of fortune interesting in itself, but took equal pleasure in devising a rich and fabulous costume for this Queen of the World. Fortune appears as sumptuously dressed as Venus is carefully undressed.

In a number of particulars the description takes up standard details in the depiction of Fortune in manuscript illustration: her surcoat trimmed with ermine and jewels, her copious mantle tied around her shoulders, her crown and flowing hair.¹⁸⁵ The surcoat (*surcote ouvert*) was by the time of Charles's captivity quite *démodé* in both England and France, but it survived for another century as ceremonial dress for royalty. In addition to this, however, Fortune is dressed in a style more appropriate to the turn of the century than to, say, the 1430s, when the love of jewel encrustations and elaborate patternings had given way to simpler, heavier styles. Charles is therefore probably describing a costume more typical of pre-1415 France than of anything he had seen more recently in England.

The surprising quality of the description is the masterful integration

¹⁸³ For further discussion of Fortune and her relation to Venus, see Patch, *Fortuna*, 96–97; Mulder, chap. 3: "Fortuna."

¹⁸⁴ xxxiii.

¹⁸⁵ The best collection of representations of Fortune is Kurose's *Miniatures of Goddess Fortune in Mediaeval Manuscripts*. A representation that includes nearly all the details mentioned is from B.L. MS. Harley 621, fol. 217, where it illustrates Boccaccio's *Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes* (pl. 121, c. 1480). For a general idea of the extravagances of style of the period Charles probably had in mind (1400–1415), the best general impression can be had from the *Très Riches Heures* of Jean de Berry; the best detailed descriptions of such costumes can be found in Scott, chap. 4: "International Gothic, c. 1380–c. 1420."

of the splendid with the miraculous, so that it is nearly impossible to tell when the description is possible of realization on this earth and when not. Fortune's mantle presents a good example. It is copious and made of silks that change color like the rainbow (4998–5002). Alan of Lille had presented just such a robe on his figure of Nature, "woven from silk-smooth wool, kaleidoscopic in its various colours."¹⁸⁶ In earthly terms, however, Charles is describing a rich garment of shot silk, in which the warp threads are of a different color (or colors) from those of the weft; as the cloth moves, the color changes and shimmers in a way that is very confusing to the eye.¹⁸⁷

Alan's Nature wears a mantle decorated with birds and beasts that declare her nature visually, just as Fortune's changeable nature is figured forth in the changing heavens pictured on her mantle, whose material is made to look like clouds (some dark with rain, others broken to reveal sunbeams) and moons in all their phases—images that seem in fact to be, not static, but moving. On the one hand this appears miraculous, but on the other, it describes accurately the kind of richly-figured (embroidered, appliqued, or brocaded) cloth that was popular with the nobility in the early fifteenth century. Alan speculates that the underclothing of Nature is decorated with the rich diversity of the plant world, and the little flowers embroidered on the lining of Fortune's mantle may owe something to such a conception, but the effusive admiration of the narrator for the workmanship of the garment implies that the finely-embroidered flowers also function simply as an example of the overwhelming richness and elegance of Fortune's costume. Detail by detail, the costume of Fortune can thus be "read" both as contemporary fashion and as extraordinary clothing (for details see explanatory notes), or as both at once—the description is a *tour de force*.

Although most of the details of Fortune's costume are in some sense twofold, the negative aspect of her character (and therefore of her gifts) is almost totally absent. Only the weeping eyes on the "ermine"

¹⁸⁶ See 2.230–415 (76–85). Fortune resembles Alan's Nature in a number of other particulars as well. Chaucer, of course, cites Alan in his discussion of Nature in *PF*, as did many authors in the intervening years for various personifications. Though Charles may have known Alan's description firsthand (as Chaucer evidently did), he may also have gotten it elsewhere. Machaut, for instance, compares Fortune to the moon and a stormy sea in his *Remède de Fortune*.

¹⁸⁷ Referred to in both English and French as *changeante* (see Michel, *Recherches*, 2:57–59, 304–5).

trim of her surcoat, the rain from the clouds on her mantle, and perhaps the pansies embroidered on its lining, all mentioned in passing, are anything other than sumptuous and beautiful, and even these details are subordinated to the dominant note of elegance and refinement. It is true that "somwhile she lowrid sore," but even the whirling dice of her "serpe" are simply "ful of verryaunces." The reference to those who fall from Fortune's wheel is quickly forgotten as the narrator spies a most beautiful lady at its topmost point. This attractive but largely one-sided view of Fortune is additional evidence that the narrator suffers from the blindness of one seduced, and seduced perhaps most of all by himself.

Form

Long poetic works written in mixed forms were never popular in England.¹⁸⁸ On the Continent they were fairly common but varied greatly in structure. One of the most "potent" works of the Middle Ages (to use Eleanor Hammond's term), Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, was written in alternating verse and prose, but Charles would have found more recent models in the works of Guillaume de Machaut, whose *dits* are written in narrative verse interspersed with lyrics in a variety of forms. His last great work, *Voir-Dit*, adds epistolary prose to these.¹⁸⁹ Froissart's *Le Livre du trésor amoureux* contains a hundred and twenty-eight ballades divided into three groups introduced by narrative sections. Christine de Pizan composed *Le Livre du duc des vrais amans* and *Le Prisonnier desconforté*, both composite works, and like many other French poets, she also wrote two ballade sequences, which she entitled *Cent Balades* and *Cent Balades d'amant et de dame*.¹⁹⁰ From such works as these and many others, Charles of Orleans has taken these two structures (works in mixed forms and sequences of poems) and made them one. He intercalated two series of ballades and one of roundels into a larger structure made up of pieces of narrative verse and lyrics in a variety of other forms. The second

¹⁸⁸ Chaucer, of course, embedded a number of lyrics in his poetry, but they constitute an extremely small proportion of his output (see Moore, 107-9).

¹⁸⁹ For a list of Old French narratives prior to Machaut containing lyrics and excellent discussions of Machaut's *Dits*, see Calin, *Poet at the Fountain*, 70 and passim. For a broader discussion of the "erotic autobiography," often in mixed forms, see Gybbon-Monypenny, 133-52.

¹⁹⁰ For a discussion of ballade sequences, see Cohen, *The Ballade*, 109ff., and *Lyric Forms*, 29-33.

dream vision, even more than the first, seems to be an experiment in the *dit amoureux* genre.

The result is a single, complex work made up of at least two very different kinds of poetry, lyric and narrative, but with the lyric heavily predominating. The roundels are presented in no thematic or "narrative" order, but the two ballade series each document a love affair somewhat in the way later sonnet sequences in English do.¹⁹¹ The unusual tension thus created between the lyric mode and the "story-telling" mode requires of the reader periodic shifts in his attention that are perhaps not always comfortable or easy to make. As works in which love was treated in a narrative as well as a lyric mode were all around Charles, in France as well as in England, it cannot be very surprising that he would try his hand at a love narrative, even though he wrote no other narrative verse.

Many individual lyrics were probably not written primarily to take a place in this work but to fulfill some other purpose: to compliment a lady, to show off Charles's skills among his hosts, or simply to express the thought of a moment.¹⁹² On the other hand, many of the lyric or narrative "sections" of the work could not have been written to stand alone in this way and operate only as parts of the larger whole. It is thus possible to refer to an individual lyric as a poem and also to allude to the whole work as a poem.

This complex structure was certainly not envisioned by the poet from the outset. Charles's original plan may have included the introductory allegory, the first ballade sequence (during which the lady dies), the withdrawal of the narrator from the service of Love, and his retirement to the Castle of No Care, during which he presents a group

¹⁹¹ Cohen makes this comparison in *Lyric Forms*, 13. Steele and Day attempt, unsuccessfully, to treat the roundels as if they contain the same sort of shadowy story line as do the ballades (3138n). C. S. Lewis described the sonnet sequence as a "prolonged lyrical meditation, chiefly on love," and the lyric sequences in this work are certainly more like meditations than "stories." In fact, Lewis's analysis of the nature of the English sonnet sequence and of misperceptions of its nature applies remarkably well to earlier lyric sequences, including these (*Sixteenth Century*, 327-28). R. H. Robbins aptly describes the illusion created by the lyric sequences: "[they are] comparable to the frames of a cartoon film strip. Passing from one frame to the next, the reader himself creates a kaleidoscopic effect which gives the illusion of action (i.e., narrative)" ("Structure," 263 n. 50).

¹⁹² Some of the roundels especially ("As for the gyft ye haue vnto me geve, / I thanke yow lo in all that in me is." "Wherefore, wherefore make ye thre naves? whi?") seem to betray a sense of social occasion more urgent than preparation for a collection would be likely to demand.

of roundels. The end of the roundel series would have signaled the end of the work. This is the French pattern. The body of English verse is much larger than its French counterpart, however; nearly all of the remaining roundels, the vision of Venus and Fortune, and the second ballade sequence exist only in English.¹⁹³

ORDER OF COMPOSITION: It is difficult to say in exactly what order many of the poems were written, but some attempt to reconstruct the pattern of composition may be useful as an aid to understanding Charles's development as a poet in English. Champion (among others) has suggested that the (French) allegorical opening and some of the first ballades that follow it, as well as the first chansons, were composed in French before Charles was captured at Agincourt at the age of twenty-one.¹⁹⁴ The fact that the first fifty-seven English ballades all have French counterparts and occur in virtually the same order in both manuscripts (O and H) lends support to the supposition that they were composed in more or less that order and probably in one period of activity. Similarly, the first fifty-two English roundels parallel the French versions (chansons) closely and were probably composed during this same period.¹⁹⁵ All these poems have French counterparts, and it seems likely that Charles's change in the plan of the work happened after the French work was virtually finished. The fact that the second half of the roundel sequence and nearly all of the poems in the second ballade sequence have no French counterparts would seem to indicate

¹⁹³ See the Index of French Counterparts; Appendix II presents the situation of the ballades in a more graphic form.

¹⁹⁴ "Elles datent bien vraisemblablement de son adolescence, les ballades juvéniles et fraîches, les chansons gracieuses . . ." (Champion, *Vie*, 241). He says of the reference to the narrator in the *Lettre de retenue* as "a present jeune d'ans," "C'est la seule indication, d'ailleurs vague, sur la date du poème (vers 1414)" (*Poésies*, 551, 407n). He even gives a detailed chronology of the French poems; according to him, the first nine ballades were written before Agincourt (*Poésies*, xxiii-xxv). Charles's embroidering of the words and music of one of his poems on the sleeves of a velvet doublet while he was still in France is not the behavior of a beginner. There was a regular exchange of goods and information between Charles and his estates in France throughout his captivity, so that there was no difficulty in obtaining those things he most wanted or needed from home, including poetry he had written. N. L. Goodrich points out that there is no mention of prison in the earliest ballades (*Themes*, 159).

¹⁹⁵ "Il est impossible de n'être pas frappé du parallélisme que présentent ici ballades et chansons" (Champion, *Vie*, 243). His statement is equally true of the first fifty or so English ballades and roundels.

that they were written later, after Charles had redesigned the work to include a second love affair. The fact that the composition of the work stretches over a period of many years probably means that it was created in a number of pieces interrupted by various other activities such as Charles's movements from castle to castle, his visits to London at the command of the king, his furious attempts to raise money for ransom and upkeep, and so on. Many of the lyrics may have been composed before much of the narrative frame was conceived as a vehicle for them.

The section of verse which immediately precedes the first ballade sequence (56–202, without French counterpart) is also probably a later piece. Camargo speaks of the *resumption* of the allegorical narrative at this point, as if the patent were embedded in a longer narrative, which he refers to as the allegorical introduction.¹⁹⁶ There are reasons to believe, however, that this narrative was written much later than the rest of this part of the work (Steele and Day guess 1436–1437?). Poirion corroborates this theory in his discussion of the order of their composition.¹⁹⁷ It is very likely that the (lost) opening allegory was written in couplets, as the French version is, whereas this narrative is in rhyme royal. It is also quite unlike the group of “narrative ballades” (75 to 81) that the poet used to further the action after the first dream vision, narrative poems with French counterparts, written in the more conservative “early” style. The tone of the exchange between the lover and the God of Love, too, differs markedly in the two narratives. Here it resembles more closely the naturalness of the lover's dealings with Venus in the second dream vision than the formality of those with the God of Love in the opening allegory or in the withdrawal from love following the first dream vision.

It should not be surprising that a number of individual lyrics read as if they were written for occasions, perhaps with no immediate thought of inclusion in a larger work.¹⁹⁸ In fact a number of the poetic “documents” in the work begin on new leaves, implying perhaps some desire

¹⁹⁶ 100–1.

¹⁹⁷ “Création poétique,” 191.

¹⁹⁸ A number of lyrics that Machaut claimed to have written for his *Voir-Dit* were actually composed much earlier (see Calin, *Poet at the Fountain*, 171, and Brownlee, 101). On the careful construction of a “showcase” for the lyrics of Jakemes in his *Roman du castelain de Couci*, see Huot, *From Song to Book*, 123–24. Many of the lyric sequences and works in mixed forms must have been constructed in this way.

to keep options open in the organization of the work; the patent with which the manuscript as we have it begins, for example, is at the top of a new leaf on a new quire. It is difficult to say, however, when or over how long a period of time the later lyrics were written, or when the second dream vision was composed, though Ballades 112 and 113, modelled on poems exchanged between the duke of Orleans and the duke of Burgundy, must have been written after the exchange of (French) poems in 1439, and the final ballades contain a kind of wit and word play that suggest that they were composed very late in Charles's captivity.¹⁹⁹ The fact that the order of the autograph manuscript is very close to that of Harley 682 implies that both probably received their final organization in preparation for the making of fair copy fairly late in Charles's captivity.

It is impossible to say when Charles first began to write in English, just as it is impossible to know when he was first exposed to the works of Geoffrey Chaucer.²⁰⁰ Charles may have encountered Chaucer's name and his work at any time during his years in England, from his very first sojourn at Windsor. Since he was known as a poet as well as a prince, any of his "hosts" or their guests might have offered him English poetry to read. The second dream vision was clearly written under the influence of the English poets (it has no French equivalent) and was certainly conceived in a period later than the early ballades and roundels.

To summarize, the order of composition may have gone something like this: when he started composing in English, Charles began by adapting material already written in French, viz., the allegory of the God of Love, around fifty ballades, and a similar number of chansons. As time went on, he composed adaptations of virtually all of the poems he had composed in French for an untitled work about a love affair that ends tragically, at the same time turning out individual lyrics in various forms as time and occasion presented themselves.²⁰¹ At some

¹⁹⁹ Poirion writes, "En effet les essais de datation jusqu'ici entrepris par les critiques donnent l'impression que l'essentiel de l'oeuvre a été composé durant deux périodes assez restreintes de sa vie: 1432-1440 et 1450-1458," citing Champion's chronology (xxiii and xxiv), Steele (xxix), and Cigada ("Studi su Charles d'Orléans").

²⁰⁰ If pressed, I would guess that the first ballades and roundels were produced during Charles's first ten or even fifteen years in England. Ann Tukey Harrison says that it is "generally accepted" that the French Ballades LV-LXX were written around 1425, but she does not explain how she arrives at that date (*Allegorical Mode*, 60).

²⁰¹ Robert Steele was convinced that the English poems preceded the French.

later date, probably in another place, and certainly after having read the poetry of some of his English counterparts, he recast the work, planning a dream vision in which Venus and Fortune would conspire to entrap the narrator into a new love affair, followed by a second ballade sequence. It may also have been around this time that he composed the section of narrative verse that precedes the first ballade sequence. He then assembled and ordered the lyrics in hand, organizing them and filling in gaps with new lyrics where necessary. In polishing the structure of the whole in preparation for the making of a fair copy, he moved a few of the poems that did not fit in well from the first ballade sequence to the second and wrote a few new ballades for the mourning section of the first sequence.²⁰²

Ballades 111 and 113, based on French poems he exchanged with Philip the Good, were written in 1439. The whole work was then copied at some point during 1439–1440 in the order in which we have it. Because Charles's life in England was never settled for long, and two or three uninterrupted years were all he could hope for before he was once again escorted to a new place of residence with different accommodations and a different pace of life, his rate of composition may have varied greatly from time to time. It would be foolhardy to attempt to date individual poems in the absence of concrete evidence.

In its earlier stages the work may have been conceived as a much longer composition than was realized. The second ballade sequence falls far short of the first, with only thirty-seven ballades in the latter sequence to balance the eighty-four in the former (or seventy-four if those following the meeting with Age are discounted). The nearly one hundred roundels likewise suggest that the poet had a larger work in mind. On the other hand, Martin Camargo suggests plausibly that the shape is probably what the poet intended, since the second love affair is recounted in exactly half as many ballades as the first (74:37),

H. H. Meier has convincingly demonstrated that the reverse must generally have been the case. Although in some cases the English version may have preceded the French, the reverse is much more likely. When he began to compose (rather than to adapt) in English, he probably did not bother to compose French versions as well.

²⁰² See Appendix II. I do not mean to suggest that the mourning poems were not written when the poet was actually in mourning. Originally many of the lyrics were probably occasional poems that were later used as part of the larger work (Ballade 59 is an adaptation into English of a poem by Christine de Pizan), which is not to say that the poet could not compose an effective mourning poem in the absence of the death of someone close to him.

subdivided into groups of twelve, twelve, and thirteen.²⁰³ If it is intentional, what does this say about the two affairs? It is impossible to say with certainty what Charles's plans for the total work were at any point.

The two love affairs, related to the audience only through ballade-letters written to each lady, differ markedly, even while they share the same form and much the same rhetoric. Charles may have intended them as contrasting accounts of two types of love affairs such as are, for instance, represented by Machaut in his *Judgment of the King of Bohemia*, in which a lady who has lost her love to death contends that she sorrows more than the lover whose lady is unfaithful to him, and vice versa. A similar sort of contrast, though less sharply drawn, informs this work. The lady of the first ballade sequence is not distinctly unkind, but the lover is frequently separated from her, and in the end Death takes her from him. The new lady is decidedly less kind, but there is less talk of separation. Its very inconclusiveness may have been the "ending" Charles was aiming at: of this kind of love there can be no end. The portrayal of the response of the lover to these two different love predicaments was probably the primary interest of the ballade sequences to a fifteenth-century audience.²⁰⁴

STYLE: Derek Pearsall has described Charles's style thus:

Long before Wyatt, he introduces the intimate, passionate speaking voice into English courtly lyric, . . . at the same time laying it under the strictest formal controls of rhetorical artifice and allowing a mischievous irony to flicker among the hot sighs and tears.²⁰⁵

Elsewhere he has remarked on its "new, intimate, personal, passionate quality and . . . stylistic inquisitiveness and wittiness which it is difficult to find elsewhere in courtly lyric before Wyatt."²⁰⁶ On the other

²⁰³ Camargo, 105.

²⁰⁴ His ending resembles that of Guillaume de Lorris's *Rose*; that is, he ends with a lyric, which does not—indeed cannot—generate narrative, but is essentially self-absorbed and static. On this view of the *Rose* see Huot, *From Song to Book*, 89–90, 141, 159–61. The lyric mode is, she says, "ephemeral and open-ended."

²⁰⁵ *Old English*, 217.

²⁰⁶ "The English Chaucerians," 234. An editor of some of his French poems describes Charles, equally insightfully, as "un poète inimitable avec son art à la fois raffiné et plein d'abandon, avec son mélange extraordinaire de préciosité et de

hand, Pamela Gradon has analyzed a number of lyrics as examples of what she calls the "abstract style."²⁰⁷

Any attempt to analyze the style of *Fortunes Stabilnes*, however, becomes a discussion of at least two styles; the poems known to be early have some stylistic differences from those known to be late. The fact that it is impossible to know precisely when many of the poems were written and to place them, therefore, in the compositional continuum complicates the matter, but the division into early and late does provide a basic context for discussing them. The early work (the first ballade sequence, the withdrawal from love, the retirement of the lover, and the first fifty or so roundels) is marked by minimal description, generally abstract language, legalistic feudal terminology, and a close adherence to the machinery of love of the courtly style.²⁰⁸ The narrator is effusively doleful, teetering on the brink of foolish excess in his suffering and grief (although the mourning poems are at times indeed moving).²⁰⁹ When dealing with superiors (the God of Love, Age, the lady), he is generally abject, or at least exceedingly humble.

The narrative section that contains the vision of Venus and Fortune and the meeting of the new lady, followed by the second ballade sequence, presents the same characters and the same problems, but cast in a slightly different light. Here the style is not very legalistic and is much less abstract.²¹⁰ The amount of description, especially in the second dream vision and in the encounter with the lady that follows, is substantial. The (ex-)lover is recognizable as the same character, yet he

naturel" (Mary, 207). John Fox also provides an insightful analysis of the style of the French lyrics in *Lyric Poetry*, 69–71.

²⁰⁷ 336–47.

²⁰⁸ The addition in the English version of various "homely phrases" has been much remarked on. In spite of these and of many sometimes startlingly concrete images, much of the language remains more abstract than readers of English poetry are generally accustomed to and may sometimes for that reason seem somewhat colorless. For a few of his legal and feudal terms in French and English, see Goodrich, *Themes*, 142 n. 16, and Steele and Day, xxxviii–xxxix.

²⁰⁹ It is especially difficult to discuss the style of a sequence of poems, since some of them may not have been written in the first place for the work at hand, but for some other purpose on some other occasion.

²¹⁰ Introducing this style early in the work by inserting a piece of narrative verse before the first ballade sequence (if indeed that is what he did) has the fortunate effect of lessening the sense of inconsistency between what might otherwise feel like two incongruent sections of the work. In this earlier narrative section he takes the God of Love to task quite firmly for hoarding hearts and eschews the feudal gingerbread that decorates all his other encounters with Cupid.

has apparently "developed" as a result of the experience of his first love affair. After his initial meeting with Venus, he treats her much less formally than he did the God of Love. The new lady, too, after their relationship is under way (that is, after the second ballade sequence has begun) comes in for some very straightforward language; the lover is now much more demanding and much less willing simply to wait for his lady's grace. His suffering turns to anger much more quickly (though he repents quickly enough).

Perhaps most striking is the injection of a broader style of humor into the second dream vision, with the result that the lover's situation during the second ballade sequence is even more pathetic than it was in the first.²¹¹ The marked incongruity between the courtly lover's perpetual grief and Venus's frank expectation that her servants must "use their members" if they are in working order is humorous. In his later work, the poet moves away from his strict adherence to the more formulaic aspects of love poetry in the courtly style as he finds his feet in the English idiom. As Cecily Clark has suggested in another context, the later English poems (including the later roundels) anticipate the later French work in their more wide-ranging tone and subject matter,²¹² their independence from much of the *Roman de la rose* machinery, and their more sceptical attitude toward that special brand of love.²¹³ In the later poems Charles finds a new brilliance and concision, and it is easy to find in them the seeds of the disillusionment that overtakes his persona in the French poems written after his return to France.

Throughout the work, Charles's poetry is characterized by exclamations, repetitions, and sudden shifts in thought and syntax. Though the lover adopts a superficially formal manner and mode of address, he frequently peppers his pleas and his laments with colloquialisms and gives way repeatedly to violent emotional surges represented by ragged syntax and rhetorical questions. In calmer moments, the lover writes intricately patterned lyrics such as Ballades 59, 98, and 100.

²¹¹ On this interplay of parts of the work, see my article "Poetic Form."

²¹² "Some English Perspectives." For example, in Roundels 70 and 88, in the lyric beginning line 4553, or in Ballade 119.

²¹³ For example, in Ballades 92 and 108. His later marked love of proverbs, too, is anticipated, for example, in Ballades 104 and 108.

Verse Forms

THE BALLADE: Although the English sample is small, it would seem that the variety of ballade forms was much greater in French than in English. In the French the basic requirements were "three stanzas, a refrain, the same rime-scheme in every stanza, and, under some circumstances, an envoy."²¹⁴ Within those strictures, the ballade could vary considerably in stanza length, in rhyme scheme, and in number of syllables per line. The majority of English ballades, on the other hand, have seven- or eight-line stanzas (*Troilus* stanza or *Monk's Tale* stanza²¹⁵), are usually written in decasyllables, and employ a new set of rhymes in each stanza. As in French, the envoy is optional.²¹⁶ Perhaps it was the very fixed quality of this fixed form that made it unattractive to English poets.

In the earlier ballades (most of which have French counterparts) Charles of Orleans employs a variety of forms. His stanza length varies from seven to fifteen lines (his envoys vary from four to eight lines); he writes in both octosyllables and decasyllables; he uses thirty-four different rhyme schemes, but he uses a single set of rhymes for each poem. In the ballades without French counterparts, however, he adopts the stricter English structure. He uses seven-line or eight-line stanzas and a decasyllabic line. He also takes frequent advantage of the one freedom the English form offers: he introduces new rhymes in each stanza.²¹⁷

Thousands of ballades were written in France in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Machaut and the poets who came after him all tried their hands at at least a few. Ballades were used to show off rhetorical and versifying skills, to tell "stories," to mock and satirize, or to praise

²¹⁴ Cohen, *The Ballade*, 49.

²¹⁵ Chaucer popularized both these stanza forms, which he borrowed directly from the French, where they were common in ballades.

²¹⁶ See Wilkins, *One Hundred Ballades*, 4. This fact has often been misunderstood, and a number of scholars, both French and English, have implied that the envoy was required in English but much less common in French ballades, or vice versa. A number of ballades in the autograph manuscript of Charles's French poetry are followed by blank spaces for envoys which the poet apparently never completed (Champion, *Le Manuscrit autographe*, 18 [N.B.: page numbers are incorrect]; they include Ballades I, V, VI, X, XIX, XX, XXXV, XXXVI, XLIV, LI, LVIII, LXV, LXVII).

²¹⁷ For a summary of the ballade structures, see Appendix II; on ballade structure in English, see Cohen *Lyric Forms*, 38-47. See also Jansen, "Fairfax Poems," 213-15.

the Virgin Mary. They were used singly, embedded in longer narrative works, or composed in sequences. One of the reasons for the form's popularity was perhaps its very flexibility. Beyond the requirement of three stanzas with refrain, the poet could do more or less what he or she liked. The variety of ballade forms created by Charles is therefore not remarkable.

One of the challenges of the form was of course to wed each stanza in turn to the same final line. In many cases, Charles uses three or four identical refrain lines, but occasionally he alters them slightly to fit a different syntactic or rhetorical structure. He seems to feel freer in his later ballades (without French counterparts) to deviate more from the initial refrain line. In Ballade 86, for instance, the refrain lines are

As for a while it shulde suffisen me
 Withouten more the which suffisid me
 My fore request so wold suffisen me
 But graunt my yeft and hit suffisith me;

in Ballade 90,

That in my resoun fynde yow hard as stoon
 That yow y fynde more hard than eny stoon
 For ought y pray y fynde yow but a stoon
 That y may fynde yow softer then a stoon.

Ballade 98, one of the most intricate of all the ballades, divides the refrain lines, the first two beginning with "welcome," the last two, with "welcome no more." This ballade also employs anaphora in the first stanza, identical pairs of line openings in the second, and alternating pairs of line openings in the third; it ends with identical line openings in the last two lines of the envoy. This sort of formal elaboration is unusual in these ballades, however. Much more frequently the ballade simply turns on an image introduced in the first stanza, sometimes developed further in the second, often with a new twist to the train of thought (and no further development of the primary image) added in the third. The envoy performs very important and varied functions, in part because it carries a strong reinforcement of the idea in the refrain line by repeating it with only three intervening lines: it may reinforce the speaker's case, call on Love or Hope for aid, cry out for the lady's pity, or reflect on the poem's message.²¹⁸

²¹⁸ For a more extensive discussion of the rhetorical development of the ballade, see Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, 374–98.

The ballade has in fact two very important loci of meaning: the opening line and the refrain.²¹⁹ These lines are often powerful and memorable; Charles seems to have crafted them with exceptional care.²²⁰ Ballade 40 opens with a question (“O Fortune, dost thou my deth conspyre?”) which lingers in the mind, however commonplace the thought. Its refrain (“Alas, alas, and is this not ynough?”) punctuates the litany of the lover’s griefs. Anyone who has spent time with this work will know at least a few of these lines on which Charles seems to have lavished so much attention (“If y koude make my wanton wisshis flee”; “Shulde y me make a lady newe? Fy! Fy!”; “The man forlost that wot not where he goth”; “That all is broke and newe to make ayene”). In some cases the refrain line itself carries the dominant image of the poem, as in Ballade 45: “In at the wyndowes of my derkid eyene.” It is the quality of the refrain lines that makes the mourning poems among the finest of all the ballades (“God haue hir sowle. Y kan no bettir say.”).²²¹

Two ballades in the first sequence (Ballade 9 and Ballade 54) contain five stanzas plus envoy, a form often referred to as a chant royal, though the two names (and indeed the forms) were sometimes confused even in the late Middle Ages.²²² The chant royal was a form considered suitable to serious subjects, and the envoy was often addressed to the prince of a *puy* or a divinity. The first of these two (440–90) catalogues the lady’s “thewis goode” (good qualities) at length, and the envoy is addressed to all ladies. The poem is not remarkable in itself but may have been intended as the culmination of the first group of ballades addressed to the lady (Ballades 1–9) (it is followed by five poems in which the lady is apparently absent). The

²¹⁹ Poirion, “Function of the Refrain.” Both loci are ideal places in which to use standard aphorisms or verbal gambits in the game of love (see Stevens, 196–97 n. 20).

²²⁰ We know that Charles was fond of asking his friends to write lyrics to an opening line of his choice, as the eleven ballades opening *Je meurs de seuf auprès de la fontaine* attest (see Champion, *Poésies*, 156, 191–92, 194, 196–200, 202–3). See Fox, *Lyric Poetry*, chap. 6: “The Ballades.”

²²¹ It is for this reason that I have included an index of refrain lines as well as an index of first lines. In searching for a particular ballade, it is often the refrain line, repeated three or four times, that is the most memorable.

²²² See Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, 361 (for analysis of the form, see 369–74), but see Wilkins, *One Hundred Ballades*, 77, where exactly such a lyric by Deschamps is labelled *chanson royal*. Champion includes the French counterparts of both Ballade 9 and 54, without comment, among Charles’s ballades, as Steele and Day do the English.

second chant royal contains no address in the envoy, but records an exchange of vows between the narrator and his lady (see 1873–1927n). The ballade on Fortune's stableness, which contains seven stanzas (4680–4735), should probably be described as a double ballade with envoy.

THE ROUNDEL: The roundel, generally consisting of sixteen lines in this work, is much briefer than the ballade and cannot therefore sustain the elaboration possible in a ballade. The adjective often applied to the roundel is "slight." In fact, much of the earlier prejudice against Charles of Orleans as a poet was based on the fact that he concentrated on the very similar "trivial" form in French, the rondeau. On the other hand, more recent scholars have valued his mastery of the form, seeing him as the apex and epitome of the late medieval lyric poet and the last to compose in a great tradition. The roundel can be valued, like the haiku, precisely on account of its strictures of size and form, which result in highly polished gems rather than brocaded garments or richly furnished halls.²²³ The roundel differs from the ballade, too, in that the two focal points in the poem, the first line and the refrain, are one (i.e., the refrain is found at the beginning, middle, and end of the lyric). The length of the refrain (two to four lines) makes it predominate even more over the rest of the poem. If the final repetition of the refrain should really include the first four lines of the poem, then it is obvious that there is really very little "space" in the roundel for development of any kind.

The roundels are much more homogeneous qua form than are the French ballades (the nine twenty-one-line roundels being the only exceptions). They are written in octosyllabic or decasyllabic lines, in a single rhyme scheme.²²⁴ The French counterpart of these English roundels is not the French rondeau, but the variety of the rondeau known as the chanson (and so the French counterparts to the roundels are labelled in Charles's autograph manuscript).²²⁵ The roundel as it

²²³ "A rondel is a carving in words," says John Fox of the French rondeaux (*Lyric Poetry*, 121). He makes interesting comparisons between the ballade and the rondeau (116–31).

²²⁴ The only exceptions are Roundels 55 and 56, in which the seventh line rhymes on *a* instead of *b*, and Roundel 59, which rhymes *baab* in the last quatrain rather than the usual *abba*.

²²⁵ At the end of *PF*, the narrator "sings" a roundel to music "imaked . . . in Fraunce." Champion notes that "les recueils de chansons sont rares au xve

appears on the page is generally fourteen lines long. The first words of the first two lines are repeated in lines 8–9 and again in 13–14. A one-line capital at the beginnings of lines 5 and 9 indicates a division that is generally supported by the content. After an opening four-line unit, the roundel usually contains some kind of turn in the fifth line, which introduces a second four-line unit, the second half of which is the refrain. This is followed by another turn in line 9 (*But* and *For* are favorite opening words for these lines).

The English manuscript indicates the repetition of two refrain lines in the middle of the poem and two lines at the end. The scribe of the French chansons in MS. 25458 usually repeats two lines in the middle but only one at the end. Why? Linker and McPeck explain: “the Scribes habitually curtailed the writing of refrains as a matter of saving time, parchment, and energy, since they were writing for readers who were undoubtedly familiar enough with the lyric form to know how to interpret the abbreviations. . . .”²²⁶ Gérard Defaux has nevertheless established beyond doubt that the chanson, an essentially musical form, calls for the repetition of the first two lines in the middle of the poem, but the first *four* lines at the end.²²⁷ He agrees in this with another scholar well known for his work on the fixed forms both in French and in English, Nigel Wilkins, whose printing of Charles of Orleans’s chansons has served as a model for the roundels in this volume.²²⁸ John Bedyngham, a contemporary of Charles, set the words of Roundel 14 to music. In 1983 this

siècle,” and further that “les chansons de Charles d’Orléans présentent tout à la fois une originalité et en quelque sorte une anomalie qui ne peut s’expliquer que par le goût particulier de l’auteur, le milieu musical où il a passé son enfance, la connaissance singulière qu’il avait de la musique” (*Poésies*, xxxiv).

²²⁶ 114.

²²⁷ “La Poétique du secret,” esp. 230–39. This is true in the case of a fourteen-line chanson; longer chansons were also possible. There has been a long controversy on the proper form of Charles’s French rondeaux, as well (which can be traced with the help of Deborah Nelson’s recent bibliography: Barroux 1939; Françon 1941; Wilkins 1969; Defaux 1972; Jodogne 1973; Françon 1975; Garey 1980). The fact that the chanson is essentially a musical form (and one that would not survive long as a favorite) does not mean that it was always set to music, but simply that it was written according to rules that derive from a musical form. Gregory Bouman is currently working on these issues with regard to Charles of Orleans’s English roundels.

²²⁸ “Structure of Ballades.” He prints the proper, full form in *One Hundred Ballades*, nos. 93–96; see also 136 n. 71 and 138 n. 78. See also Kastner (who does not seem to distinguish between the rondeau and the chanson), 251, for an example by Deschamps of the form he calls *rondel double*, and 253, where he prints Charles’s Rondeau L in the same form.

song was recorded in exactly the form I have presented here: a full (four or five line) refrain recurs at the end of each roundel.²²⁹ What is not present in the manuscript is enclosed in square brackets.²³⁰

The opening line of the roundel is often an "attention getter," either because it is aphoristic or proverbial or because it is phrased as urgent direct address. Roundel 47 is a good example of the latter:

Ye are to moche as in my dette, madame,
 Ye owe me, swete, to many cossis dere,
 Which wold full fayne, if hit were yowr plesere,
 Ye payde hem me in savyng of yowre name,
 So that of dette y ought yow not to blame
 Which dar not don, me thenke, hit for daungere.
 Ye are to *moche as in my dette, madame.*
 Ye owe me, *swete, to many cossis dere.*

Wite ye, y haue a writ out for þe same
 To tache yow with! y rede yow pay hem here,
 Lest ye be restid with an officere
 Of Loue! Fy! fy! hit were to gret a shame!

²²⁹ Fallows, "Words and Music"; Fallows also published a transcription of the words and music ("Two Mid-Fifteenth-Century English Songs"), including the words to the French version of the poem as well. The music appears in fourteen manuscripts. The recording, by The Medieval Ensemble of London, is entitled "Mi Verry Joy."

²³⁰ The brackets also serve to retain the correspondence of the line numbering between this edition and that of Steele and Day, i.e., the (usually) two additional lines are unnumbered.

"After Machaut no major poet was able to set his or her lyrics to music: Deschamps, Froissart, Christine de Pisan, Alain Chartier, Charles d'Orléans, François Villon" (Wilkins, *Music*, 3). It was not at all uncommon, however, for musicians of the day to set lyrics written by others to music; what is more, because the forms were fairly fixed, it was easy to borrow the music from one lyric to sing the text of another (in this regard, see Fallows, "Words and Music," as well as Droz and Thibault). Evidence suggests that Charles was a musician who played the harp (as his mother had) and perhaps also the organ, but we have no evidence that he ever composed any music (his secretary, Robert Vilot, gave the duke a "tres belle harpe" in 1457 [B.N. MS. Pièces Originales Vilot, no. 23]; in return the duke helped to finance the construction of a house for him near Orléans. There are regular household expenses for restringing and repair of harps. See Soyer and Trouillard, *Cartulaire*, 371; Champion, *La Librairie*, lvi n. 3). The harp should not be thought an unlikely instrument; Philip the Good also played the harp (Vaughan, *Burgundy*, 168, and *Philip the Good*, 160), as did James I (McDiarmid, 45) and Charles's own brother Jean of Angoulême (Crow, 91).

Ye are to *moche as in my dette, madame,*
 Ye owe me, *swete, to many cossis dere,*
Which wold full fayne, if hit were yowr plesere,
 Ye *payde hem me in sawyng of yowre name.*

The roundel opens with a strong, spoken accusation, followed by an only slightly softened (“swete”) explanation of the problem in the second line. The first two lines must be detachable from, yet coherent with, the next two because the refrain is used in two different forms, and each must be capable of being read as a complete statement. Line five, which begins with “So,” is not so much a turn as an explanation of the consequence of the lady’s desired “payment.” Line nine, however, represents a kind of new beginning, a strong turn towards the legalistic and mock-severe. Far from trailing off, either in harshness or in pressure placed on the lady to “pay up,” this quatrain makes a forceful demand in the strongest of terms, which in turn paves the way for the repetition of the opening quatrain, which by contrast now sounds much more gentle and “smiling” than before.

The tension in this roundel between legalism and love points up another characteristic of the roundels, their clever playfulness. Unlike the ballades, many more of the roundels are joyful and teasing, and they give the impression more often of being exchanged with the lady in person rather than of being sent to a lady who is far away. John Fox’s observations on the ballade, rondel (rondeau), and sonnet are to the point:

Both [the rondel and sonnet] involve a repetitive pattern, inherent in the rondel, optional in the sonnet where its use is not dictated by the structure. The sonnet leads smoothly through a carefully ordered rhetorical progression to its climax, whereas the rondel remains imprisoned within its circular movement and can only culminate in its starting-point, a similar state of affairs prevailing also in the ballade. Ballade and rondel alike are formalized exercises in breadth, not depth. . . . They provide a lyrical approach to . . . experience as against the relatively intellectual approach of the sonnet. They are a set of variations on a theme, musically satisfying rather than intellectually so since they achieve their effect through neatness and symmetry of form, and not, as in the sonnet, through an ordered progression to the

mentally satisfying conceit of the last line.²³¹

OTHER VERSE FORMS: Charles also employs other verse forms. He seems, in fact, to have chosen a different form for almost every "piece" in the work. The opening letter patent (1-55), which rhymes *aaab bccc*, etc., is written in decasyllabic lines except for every fourth line, which is tetrasyllabic. The narrative that follows (56-202) is in rhyme royal. The Vision of Age (2540-2715) is in stanzas rhyming *ababbaab*. The petition addressed to the Cupid (2716-2813) is in twelve-line decasyllabic stanzas rhyming *aab aab bba bba*, with trisyllabic lines in 2, 5, 8, and 11. The withdrawal from Love (2814-2981) is recounted in a series of seven "narrative ballades," poems in eight-line stanzas with refrains but no envoys. The letter from the ex-lover to Cupid (2982-3045) is in eight-line stanzas rhyming in couplets. The end of the banquet is recounted in rhyme royal stanzas (4319-4486), as is the second dream vision and encounter with the new lady (4638-5351) and the second epistle (6129-70). A handful of miscellaneous lyrics that mark the end of the "jubilee" are in various forms (see 4487n). The first epistle (5688-5783) is in twelve "Monk's Tale" stanzas. Charles, a technically versatile poet, enjoyed the challenge of many verse forms with their various difficulties and used form as a fundamental element in his poetic composition.

VERSIFICATION: Much of Charles's English verse is unusually regular. Eleanor Prescott Hammond speaks of the poet's "good ear for rhythm." He was, she says, "both bilingual and a good metrist. He twists his syntax with a strong hand, using sometimes difficult inversions. He wastes no words; he is not clumsy, and he does not blur the light tenderness of the French, though he does occasionally add firmness and freshness"—and she cites a few of his graceful lines.²³² Charles makes frequent and effective use of enjambment, both from line to line:

When that next approchen gan the fest
Of Loue and semblid was his parlement (2814-15)

²³¹ *Lyric Poetry*, 130.

²³² *English Verse*, 215. She also remarks on the "superiority of verse-flow" in the poems (16, 214-15). "The handling of English rhythm by Walton is so much better than by either Hoccleve or Lydgate that he, with the translator of Palladius and the translator of Charles d'Orléans, deserves special attention from students of the English metre written in this bewildered period" (40).

and from stanza to stanza:

. . . and as y shope me hir to kis
She wayfid me and lokid passyng straunge.
(4777-78)

Though an occasional line does not seem to scan, he is capable, on other occasions, of elegant marriages of syntax and meter.

Vpon a launde, the gras soft, smothe, & fayre
That likyng gret hit was me to bihold,
And homward þus as y gan me repayre
I fond a company, some yong, some olde,
That gan eche othir fast in armys hold,
For at the post-and-piler did þei play;
And all were gentil folkis, dar y say. (5198-5204)

He can also write convincing conversational lines. The lover, in discussion with his heart, says,

“Seest thou not well that Fortune doth vs fayle?
Hast thou good lust to lyue in sorow?” “Nay,
Iwis,” he seide, “y trust more to attayne.
I had a praty look yit yestirday,
As me reportid hath myn eyen twayne.” (363-67)

The bulk of the lines of *Fortunes Stabilnes* are decasyllabic; most of the remainder are octosyllabic (and Charles rarely introduces extra syllables into a line).²³³ It is instructive in the matter of versification to look at the French poet's work in comparison with that of an Englishman writing French verse: John Gower. Macaulay says of Gower's *Mirour de l'Omme* that the verses

have an unmistakably English rhythm. . . . One of the reasons for this is that the verse is in a certain sense accentual as well as syllabic, the writer imposing upon himself generally the rule of the alternate beat of accents and seldom allowing absolutely weak syllables to stand in the even places of his verse.²³⁴

Similarly (but looking in the opposite direction) the verse of the French

²³³ For a fairly detailed discussion of the meters of Charles's French ballades, see Fox, *Lyric Poetry*, 106-11.

²³⁴ *French Works*, xlv-xlvi.

poet writing English seems occasionally weak in precisely this, the alternate stresses expected in English verse. That Charles allows some stress patterns that are not always comfortable for English readers points to the verse as the work of a Frenchman. Though the quality of his English verse far surpasses that of his English contemporaries in the regularity of its cadences, he never succeeds in suppressing entirely his French poetic inclinations.

Charles writes three regular variants of the five-beat decasyllabic line: headless lines, "Lydgate" or broken-backed lines, and lines with one or more inverted stresses. Headless lines are common, as in "Fleth the shott of swete regard" (3873) or "Wynne the game withouten more dowtaunce" (1636). Often, as here, they are the opening or refrain lines of lyrics. One of his finest is the opening line of Roundel 24, a poem of despair: "Hit is doon. Ther is no more to say."

Charles also writes many Lydgate lines (or lines in which a syllable is lacking at a medial pause): "O stedfast trowth, displye thi baner" (944)²³⁵ or "For his plesaunce sum fayre lady make" (2675). The first two feet of "Aftir wyntir the veer with foylis grene" (5436), the second foot of "Where y sorow the deth of my maystres" (2477), and the third of "Which axid me whithir y was away" (2398) are apparently inverted (or perhaps Charles did not hear the stresses clearly). In addition, two unstressed syllables very occasionally take the place of one, as in line 5999: "The tothir is he which lyvith in plesaunce."²³⁶ This could also be seen as an instance of elision, but in any case elision between (rather than within) words is uncommon in these poems.

It is difficult to know how to scan the opening line of Ballade 76 (in which the lover protests vehemently the God of Love's suggestion that he take a new lady): "Allas sir! allas sir! pardoun me!"²³⁷ Such lines (which lack syllables or contain nonstandard stress patterns) frequently occur at the significant points in the lyrics, such as the opening lines, implying that they are intentionally odd.²³⁸

²³⁵ The stress on prefixes is not uncommon and that on the final syllable is typical of Charles's verse. The rhyming line is "And fresshe assayle this newe and strong fronter" (also sometimes spelled *fronture*).

²³⁶ See also 6230.

²³⁷ The strain of the opening cadence is often pointed up by the easy flow of the line Charles composes to follow it, in this case: "For while y lyue hit may not be, quod y." The French version of the line, by contrast, runs smoothly: "Helas! sire, pardonnez moy."

²³⁸ It is not always clear why this should be so (see, e.g., the opening lines of

A disconcerting peculiarity of Charles's meter is that he sometimes drops, in the midst of a passage in decasyllabic verse, into octosyllables for one, two, or more lines, then switches back to ten-syllable lines.²³⁹ Within a roundel written in decasyllables he writes

So wolde y pray you, gef y durste or may,
 The sight to se as y haue seyne,
 Forwhi þat craft me is most fayne
 And wol ben to þe howre in which y day.

(Roundel 69)

Charles is not unique in this alternation, however. The author of the (decasyllabic) Middle English translation of Michault Taillevant's *Le Débat du cœur et de l'oeil* also drops into octosyllables at various points, for example,

Like as frute may not wexe ripe kyndely
 But if he take of the sonne summe manere hete
 In like wise I may not lyue trewly
 Withoute thy counseille wherfore cause grete
 I haue to blame the sith I may not gete
 Sith of hir alas the harde while
 I am not like with hir to mete
 Howe maist thou forth me thus begile.²⁴⁰

The fact that the original is written in octosyllables would lead naturally to the suspicion that the translator was simply inattentive in his regular "padding out" of eight-syllable lines into ten. The matter is more complicated in Charles's case, however, for even in the second

Ballades 46, 83, 88, 97, 111, 113, and Roundel 43), but see also Fox, *Lyric Poetry*, 106–11. Occasionally syllables seem to be omitted following exclamations or questions, as if they took up more *time* than ordinary discourse:

What haue y doon offense that ye so are

Glad me to sle? Alak! am y not he

Ye brought to Loue? —and wolde y square? (337–39).

Some problematic lines include 1383, 1676, 1776, 2541, 2905, 3997, 5500. Other lines occasionally have an extra syllable, e.g., 1261, 1786, 1566, 2169–70.

²³⁹ Many of these lines are pointed out in the notes. See esp. the lover's petition to Cupid and Venus, where the many octosyllabic lines do not seem to fall into a regular pattern (2716–2813).

²⁴⁰ Stanza 33, lines 257–64; Hammond, "Eye and Heart," 246. Although the meter is frequently faulty (the second line of the stanza, e.g., is too long unless *if* is a scribal intrusion), the final two (perhaps three) lines are definitely octosyllabic.

dream vision, which has no French counterpart, he falls repeatedly into octosyllables.²⁴¹ *The Boke of Cupide* may present some evidence that the problem is not that of a translator, however. As his editor points out, Clanvowe also drops occasionally into octosyllables.²⁴² There are lyrics in which this variation in line length seems conscious and effective, however, as in Roundel 24.

Developing some idea of the poet's understanding of English pronunciation patterns will help the reader in coping with most lines that do not seem to scan. Inflectional final *-e*'s (true or false) are not pronounced, though plural, oblique (verbal) endings often are.²⁴³ Thus in line 2700 ("And thus of loue and his goode folkis alle") the plural ending of "folkis" is pronounced (but not the two final *-e*'s). In line 2662 ("Even clene renounce here louys werkis alle"), the first word is monosyllabic (as it is elsewhere), and the plural and possessive endings are pronounced. The spellings *-id*, *-ith*, and *-ist* are not always an indication that the syllable is to be pronounced, however:

And that she shall be helid hastily.
But what y say he settith not therby,
Saue wayle and wepe and prayeth in euery stounde.
(1941-43)

The verbal endings are pronounced in the first two lines, but not in the third.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ For instance lines 5037-85, where lines shift erratically between eight and ten syllables.

²⁴² E.g., lines 152, 202 (see Scattergood, 18). On the other hand, these octosyllabic lines could, I suppose, be taken to indicate that the work is a translation of an unknown original.

²⁴³ Charles's resistance to the pronunciation of *-e* is perhaps remarkable in a French poet who was often turning eight-syllable lines into ten-syllable lines and who had a collection of techniques to fill them out. To take an example at random, none of the final *-e*'s in Roundel 35 are pronounced, neither nouns, verbs, adjectives, nor adverbs (3637 is headless; *eyen* and *atonys/atonnes* are disyllabic; *presentid* is trisyllabic). In general, if a line does not seem to scan, it is a better strategy to look for words with "adjustable length" than to begin pronouncing final *-e*'s. A single possible exception is the form *wolde*, which seems to be disyllabic on occasion.

²⁴⁴ In lines 2556-57, the preterite ending does not require a syllable (Charles's usual stress on *-yng* is emphasized):

He stent awhile and afir resonyd me,
Saiyng, "My frend, ne takist thou of me cure?"

In 1811, *menyst* is monosyllabic, as is *semeth* (1826) and *makist* (1838), but *deservith* (1825) is trisyllabic, and *spekist* (1840) is disyllabic (see also 346, 368, 1292).

In some words syllables are frequently (but not always) elided (*even*, *eyen*, *ellis*, *yvill*, *onys*, *besily*, *hardily*, *hastily*, *neuryrtheles*); in others, extra syllables seem to be implied (*gret[i]ly*, 5684; *humb[e]ly*, 2434, 2902, etc.). These and other words may vary in length. In lines 2639 and 4736, *poor(e)* is disyllabic (cp. *pouer*, 4809), but it may also be monosyllabic (5341).²⁴⁵ *Eyen* may be mono or disyllabic. *Rememb[e]raunce* is apparently more often tetrasyllabic than trisyllabic (*-e* is unpronounced).²⁴⁶

Normally unstressed parts of words may receive stress. The *re-* prefix is often, but not always stressed.²⁴⁷ Charles may rhyme *louer* on the second syllable (504). Stress may fall on inflectional endings, as in *hertis* (6171) and *louely/swetely* (441–43). A guide to pronunciation of individual words is provided in the notes.

The rhyme in the English poems has its peculiarities, too, and Charles's linguistic background again acts as a guide to his practices in English. Because French verse is not governed by stress patterns, the terms "masculine" and "feminine" in regard to rhyme are applied somewhat differently. The terminology can therefore be confusing. "Feminine" rhymes in French involve the rhyming of the last two syllables, but only in cases in which the final syllable is *-e*: *taire/faire*. If the last two syllables rhyme and the final one is not an *-e*, the rhyme is called "double": *voudrez/toudrez*. (Both would qualify as "feminine" rhymes in English—if the final *-e* were pronounced, that is—as in *tango/mango*.)

On the other hand "rich" rhyme requires that the consonant preceding the last tonic vowel of the line be identical: *grever/eschiver*. (This kind of rhyme is not distinguished in English from the one that follows—*carouse/arouse*, *amount/dismount*.)²⁴⁸ French also has a kind of rhyme known as "poor" rhyme, or rhyme involving the vowel of the

²⁴⁵ *Power(e)*, too, may go either way.

²⁴⁶ E.g., 2198. I base such statements on the fact that lines including words such as *humbly* and *remembraunce* are regularly a syllable short (see *encombraunce* in 5989). The phrase *by þe rood* seems to have only two syllables (e.g., 5321). Charles does not hesitate to adjust the number of syllables to be pronounced to suit his line; *company* is usually three syllables, but in 481 it is two.

²⁴⁷ Chaucer, of course, stresses this prefix on occasion, too. Other prefixes, too, may be stressed or unstressed, as need arises: in 534 *displeyng* is stressed on the first and third syllables; in 5525 *amende* is stressed on the first.

²⁴⁸ Kastner refers to this rhyme in French verse as "masculine," though it is more commonly called "rich" (39), but the terminology was variable in the Middle Ages.

final syllable and whatever follows it, for example, *semblant/devant, bateau/rondeau*.²⁴⁹

We may summarize by saying that, roughly speaking, the English terms "feminine" and "masculine" are equivalent to the French terms "double" and "poor" respectively ("rich" rhyme falling somewhere in between). Avoidance of "rich" rhyme would therefore preclude "feminine" or "double" rhyme. In an age in which feminine and double rhymes were extremely popular and masculine rhymes were dubbed "poor," Charles chose the latter overwhelmingly in his French verse.²⁵⁰ Such rhymes as *louer/yow fer* (504-6); *louely/womanly* (441-43); *redelas she* (1864-66); *powerel/prayer* (2180-81) must therefore have seemed perfectly acceptable to Charles. Unlike Chaucer's poems or those of his other followers, the English poems contain very few feminine rhymes.

In Ballade 29 Charles rhymes *of his/goodis* and *that is/grevis* on the final syllable; similarly, in Ballade 49 he rhymes *wisshis/ther nys* and *me is/woundis*. Now, Chaucer rhymes these same parts of speech, but only as feminine rhymes (*false goddis/forbode is, MchT 2295-96*).²⁵¹ Charles shares his preference for the final *-is* spelling with the Northern poets, but none of them share his preference for treating the plural noun ending as a masculine rhyme.²⁵² His belief that plural noun endings could fall in stressed position makes for awkward stressing in

²⁴⁹ Assuming that the stress falls on the final syllable, this would qualify in English as a normal "masculine" rhyme: *arise/defies*. Hammond also discusses "cheap" rhyme in English, which is rhyme "merely of suffix" as in *softly/openly* (Chaucer, 501). This should not be confused with *rime pauvre*.

²⁵⁰ Kastner comments that Charles, "unaffected by the prevailing fashion," avoided rich rhyme (49). The French poet who comes closest to his high proportion of masculine or "poor" rhymes is his friend Jean de Garençières. John Fox's discussion of Charles's attitudes and those of his predecessors and contemporaries toward rhyme in this context is both interesting and useful (*Lyric Poetry*, 132-36). His discussion is, however, potentially confusing because he uses the term *rime assonante* for what I, following Kastner, have called "poor" rhyme (Fox's use of the example *semblant/devant* makes this clear). Kastner uses the term "assonance" to refer to a likeness of final tonic vowels alone: *bell/per* (40).

²⁵¹ In *T&C* he tends to rhyme *-is* only with monosyllabic words, with the common exceptions *ywis* and *amys* (see Masui).

²⁵² See Daunt, 149. Henryson rhymes *blynnys/within is* ("The Annunciation" is full of such rhymes); Dunbar, who more often tends to rhyme plural nouns with each other, rhymes *delyt is/wrytis* (98); Douglas, *skant is/wantis* (9) and *abufe is/behuffis* (33). In none of these instances is the stress on the final syllable. (Charles shares with many of the poets of his age a tendency to rhyme on the *-ing* suffix.)

the remainder of the line. The root of a two-syllable rhyme word is often unstressed, whereas the prefix of a three-syllable rhyme may receive unusual stress.

Though Marjorie Daunt treated the matter of Charles's rhymes in detail, her attempts to justify Charles's practices sometimes lead her to underestimate the peculiarities of his rhymes.²⁵³ Admittedly, some of Charles's rhymes appear to be more unusual than they are because of frequent "misspellings" such as *mette* for *meet*, *hir* for *hire* (wage), *deyuure* for *devere* (Fr *devoir*), *enpresse* for *emprise*, *pressen* for *prisoun*, etc., but some of his rhymes are truly odd.²⁵⁴

Charles frequently treated *-y* [-i:] and *-e(e)* [-e:] as good rhymes, much more frequently than did other fifteenth-century poets.²⁵⁵ Often either he or his scribe appears to attempt to mask this license by adjusting the spelling to suit the rhyme, for instance, *bode/necessite/affynyte* (24ff.) but *body/Araby/foly* (Ballade 9).²⁵⁶ In Ballade 106 *eye* rhymes *crewelte/ye*, but in Ballade 116 it rhymes *ocupy/by*. In Ballade 53, *rede* (ready) rhymes *degrel/she*; in Ballade 44 *heue* (heavy) rhymes *she* and *vnworthe*, *be*. Perhaps the poet's most interesting conflation is Ballade 42, where the rhymes are *mercy/worthe/mysere/aduersite/me/partel/theellade*.

²⁵³ 135–54. Because the article is unfortunately riddled with typographical errors, it should be used with caution. See also Jansen, "Fairfax Poems," 221–24, where he bases his work with rhymes in Harley 682 and Fairfax 16 on the results of our discussions of Charles's rhyming habits.

²⁵⁴ On the spelling of James I, see McDiarmid, 44–45. The peculiarities of Charles's rhymes are pointed out as an aid to reading; for further detail, readers are referred to Marjorie Daunt's discussion.

²⁵⁵ Norman Davis says of the language a century after Hoccleve that [e:] was raised so that it rhymed with [i:], as in *be/clerely* (501). In Charles's day, "All the words in question could be heard with [i:], the original [e:] ones on account of the GVS, the original [i:] ones in spite of it—not, indeed, from the same speakers, but that is quite a different story" (Johan Gerritsen, private correspondence). Either Charles heard this change in its early stages and adopted it as his own pronunciation (at least in his poetry) because it afforded him so many rhymes, or he simply did not hear the difference that Englishmen did. The linguistically conservative nature of courtly poetry may have contributed to the maintenance of the distinction between the two sounds by other poets of the period.

²⁵⁶ Other spelling variants in rhyme position are Ballade 1 *worthe* (but Ballade 9 *worthe*), Ballade 12 *curtesy/party* (but line 320 *curtese*, Ballade 22 *parte*), Ballade 53 *luste* (but Ballade 12 *lusty*), Ballade 76 *lade* (but Ballade 9 *lady*), Ballade 37 *compane* (but Ballade 43 *company*). In some cases the spellings within a lyric do not match: Ballade 12 *happy* rhymes *aduersite/me* (cf. Ballade 45 *happe*); Ballade 21 *mercy* rhymes *tranquyllite/se* (cf. Ballade 66 *merce*); Ballade 87 *foly* rhymes *felicite/see*, (cf. Ballade 32 *fole*); etc.

Although most of these instances are taken from the earlier ballades (with French counterparts), such rhyming and spelling patterns are evident throughout the work. The matter is more complex, however. In other cases Charles apparently tries to rhyme them against each other, as in Ballades 35, 43, 45, and 76. The rhyme group [-e:] plus [-i:] is by far the largest Charles used. He evidently depended on it to give him a tool he would otherwise lack in English: a rhyme which included a huge number of common and uncommon words and could be used for many parts of speech, yet lacked the complicating factor of a final consonant.

In the matters of rhyme and meter, therefore, one might speculate that Charles exhibits some of the same tendencies in his English poems that he does in his French: he nearly always rhymes on the final syllable alone, he seems to choose a few final syllables that he can depend on, and he may in some cases value syllable count over stress pattern. Other factors may, of course, account for some of the observed phenomena: a Frenchman's analysis of English sounds, dialectal (and class) variation in English sounds during this period, the inexorable march of the Great Vowel Shift, or a combination of these (and perhaps other) factors. What can be said with certainty is that Charles employs rhymes that are not usual in the work of his native English contemporaries.

Charles commonly rhymes words with the vowels in *wesshe* and *disshē* (4389–91), hence: *forfelle/wille* (709–11); *yet/sitt* (5056–57); *set/witt* (5259–60); etc. He seems not to distinguish between a number of other rhyme pairs, either: *lool/do* (4408–9); *pardon/doon/mone* (moon) (4081–85); *doon/suspicioun/gardoun* (6216–21). In the matter of vowel length, Marjorie Daunt is forced to admit that “in some cases the spellings are so confusingly used that it is difficult to come to any decision as to the length of vowel:— e.g., *el, eel, ele, ell, elle*. Cf. *deel, dwel*. 5310.” She concludes that “on the whole Charles seems to keep the groups distinct, though there are a few ambiguous cases.”²⁵⁷

In Roundel 58 Charles rhymes [f] and [v] (*sleuelleue/gevel/greef/myschēf*). Daunt suggests that final [v] might be devoiced in this case, perhaps evidence of Northern influence in Charles's English.²⁵⁸ Elsewhere he rhymes *gevel/myschevel/foryeuellyuel/shrevellyvel/clevel/greve* (grief) (4524–35). He sometimes rhymes *ough* with *ow* (*how/lough* [laughed]/*ynough*,

²⁵⁷ 152.

²⁵⁸ 150.

5220ff.), and in other cases *ough* with *of* (*oft/bithought* [Roundel 66]).²⁵⁹

It is impossible to say whether Charles twisted his grammar to suit his poetic ends or whether he simply borrowed French forms unconsciously, but comparison of his English work with Gower's French work may be instructive. Gower "was freer than continental writers [writing in French] in making grammar give way before the requirement of metre and rhyme."²⁶⁰ Charles does do something of the same sort not only in his English poetry, but even in his French. In lines 2897–98, the form *delyuerment* (rather than *deliverance*) provides his rhyme. In Ballade 34, he follows the French in rhyming on *departement* (separation), though his usual form is *departyng*. His usual form is *gouvernaunce*, but in Ballade 78 the lover says of his heart that Love had it *longe in gouvernement* (under his control); the corresponding French line rhymes on *ligement*. All of these *-ment* forms in the English poems are perfectly acceptable French forms unattested in fifteenth-century English.²⁶¹ In addition to his use of this suffix to make nouns out of verbs,

Il est intéressant de voir ces mots [i.e., the nouns created] entrer en concurrence avec d'autres noms, purs ou construits sur un autre suffixe, et dont le sens est à peu près le même: *alegeance/allegement, decevance/decevement, gouvernance/gouvernement, maintien/maintenement, pensee/penser/pensement*. Il y avait là une métamorphose extérieure qui permettait d'exprimer la même idée dans différents systèmes de rimes. Le poète semble avoir considéré ces mots comme de simples synonymes.²⁶²

Charles also uses this technique (or lapse) to create rhymes in *-aunce*: *deseraunce* (desire), *deservaunce* (deserving), and *desperaunce* (despair).

²⁵⁹ On the former, see Daunt, 146.

²⁶⁰ Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, 360. McCaulay says that Gower "takes liberties with the forms of words in flexion in order to meet the requirements of his rhyme. . . . The first of these [expedients] is a tolerably extensive disregard of gender. . . . A much more wide-reaching principle is that which has to do with the 'rule of s'. . . . Rhyme . . . must be the first consideration, and a great advantage is obtained by the systematic combination of the older and the newer rule" (xvi–xviii). My general impression is that Charles's English was not quite as good as he thought it was; he seems to have valued fluency and the effects and relations of sounds over accuracy (or "correctness").

²⁶¹ See also 1447 and note. Charles's "borrowings" seem to have worked in two directions; Staehle identified three English words used by Charles in his French poems: *desserte* (from *desservir*, E deserve), *galimafree* (OE *gallimawfrey* [sic]), and *meschief* (E *mischief*; Staehle, 15–16).

²⁶² Poirion, *Le Lexique*, 13.

He employs the French form *servaunce* for *servaunt* (3045). In addition, he uses present tense verbs for preterite (1773 [inf], 5025),²⁶³ plural verbs for singular (2777, 3724, 6105) and singular for plural (4027); plural nouns for singular (2048) and vice versa (4881); and even adds an adverbial ending to adjectives (line 474, see also 5017n). He obviously has difficulty with rhymes, choosing unusual words or using them in unusual senses: *go* [trans.] for "leave (a place)" (4609) or *avaunce* (2975) and *prance* (2978) for "go." Such instances are mentioned in the notes, as are various other peculiarities in the rhymes. Though Charles appears to repeat a rhyme word occasionally, I have not found a single instance in which a word was clearly repeated with the same meaning.

Relation of the English Poems to their French Counterparts

In reworking the same material in English that he used in French, Charles sometimes worked very closely from the French text, but sometimes diverged totally from his original.²⁶⁴ The patent that opens the (extant) work is a good example of a poem closely translated from the French, though even here there are significant differences. On the other hand, the third stanzas of Ballades 8 and 73 in English differ significantly from their French counterparts.²⁶⁵

One of Charles's most intriguing poetic techniques is his playing on the sounds of French poems in composing his English poems. In Ballade 23 "Loyal Espoir," for instance, becomes "Royall Hope." The pair "rollid"/"enroillie" ("rusted") from the French and English refrains of Ballade 83 (3081) is especially piquant.²⁶⁶ Since Charles

²⁶³ On this tendency in Chaucer, see Ross, *Miller's Tale*, 3182–86n: "changes from preterite to present occur frequently throughout *CT* (and in all ME literature), sometimes with the effect of the 'historical present,' but just as frequently without any apparent purpose" (129).

²⁶⁴ Although Charles often used the same rhyme words in both versions of a poem, he did not hesitate to vary the rhyme schemes when it suited him (see Cohen, *The Ballade*, 268–71).

²⁶⁵ The fact that lyrics sometimes begin as close translations but move away from the French original seems sound evidence for seeing Charles as a poet trying out his skills in English in preparation for composition in his newest language. See also the envoy of Ballade 83, the final lines of Roundel 19, and note to Ballade 49. I have generally noted significant divergences from the French versions in the explanatory notes.

²⁶⁶ John Fox gives a French example of the late medieval preoccupation with sound: in his "Balade equivoque, retrograde et leonime" the poet begins each line with the final syllable of the previous line, but with a change in meaning.

frequently played on differences between the two languages, “bending” spellings, sounds, and meanings to suit his fancy, the use of the French for solutions to the problems in the English poems is itself problematic. To depend on the French poems to explain the English is to revert, perhaps not quite consciously, to the old “translator theory” and to deny the poet his right to diverge from a prior text to create a new poem. As Derek Pearsall has said of the relation of John Gower’s Latin glosses on his English text, “Surely a poet is entitled to misappropriate his own work.”²⁶⁷ I have therefore cited the French version of an English poem in the notes only where an apparent crux has demanded some solution (or at least some creative guesswork), where two equally attractive readings are involved, or where the differences are for some reason especially interesting. For many additional comparisons between the two bodies of poetry, the reader may wish to consult the notes of the Steele and Day edition or the Champion edition.

Some differences between the two bodies of poetry are systematic. The English poems are more dramatic, more vivid, more concrete, more colloquial, more impassioned, and more pessimistic than the French. For example, the many expressions using *shert* do not occur in the French poems.²⁶⁸ In Ballade XXXII, the lover gives the lady his heart:

Lasse, lasse, maleureuse et *dolente!*
Lente me voy, fors de soupirs et *plains*.
Plains sont mes jours d’ennuy

(*The Middle Ages*, 324 n. 10)

For another example, see Christine de Pizan’s “Ballade à doubles rimes” (Roy, 3.191); for sound play of a different sort, see Machaut’s *rondeau* (*Louange*, no. 264), part of which is reproduced in Johnson, 56–57.

²⁶⁷ “Gower’s Languages,” paper read at the 25th International Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, MI, 1990). Cecily Clark has quite rightly taken to task those who would use the English poems as handy translations in presentations of Charles’s French poems. In speaking of John Fox’s adoption of this method she says, “these [English poems], which themselves need and often are accorded further glossing, are no sops to the ‘general reader’, for even a Middle-English scholar will use Charles’s French to explain the Middle-English versions, rather than the other way about” (“Some English Perspectives,” 257). More recently, Sarah Spence (*French Chansons*) has presented the French chansons (those that have English counterparts) in this way. Douglas Kelly’s use of this technique may mislead the reader into applying his (sound) interpretation of certain French poems to their English counterparts without taking the English context and structure into proper account.

²⁶⁸ Steele and Day list a number of these differences (305). Compare Pearsall’s analysis of the differences between Chartier’s *La Belle Dame* and Ros’s translation: “Ros tends to be more colourful, more vigorous, more obvious, in a sense more English” (“English Chaucerians,” 226).

Humblement vous en vueil prier
 En le gardant en loyauté,
 Soubz clef de Bonne Volenté.

The English version intrudes a question—and a pretty unlikely one at that:

In my most humbil wise y yow requere
 To kepe in trouthe—how? in an holow tre?
 Nay, vndir kay of faithfull volunte.

(Ballade 32)

The colloquial tone of some of the verse derives from the process of turning octosyllabic verse into decasyllabic:

Je suy pris et ne puis entrer
 Ou point que desire souvent;
 Dieu me doint une fois gietter
 Chance qui soit aucunement
 A mon propos . . .

(Ballade XLVI)

But take am y, and y not entre may
 The poynt y wolde—the more is my grevaunce—
 But Jhesu graunt me (loo, what may y say?)
 That y may onys attayne sum happe chauce
 To my purpos . . .

(Ballade 46)

Ballade 40 opens “O Fortune, dost thou my deth conspyre? / Onys let me pese, y pray thee hertily!” whereas the French version reads simply “Fortune, vueilliez moy laissier / En paix, une fois, je vous prie” (Ballade XL).²⁶⁹ The English narrator calls on death more frequently and discusses his misery at greater length. The sum of these differences is a verse that is stronger (and sometimes less subtle) and a narrator who is more emotional, at times more demanding, and occasionally more foolish than his French counterpart.

²⁶⁹ The more emotional tone of the English is in no sense un-French. For a comparison of Machaut’s (and Chaucer’s) rhetorical excess as compared with Boccaccio’s more restrained tone, see Wimsatt, “Guillaume de Machaut,” esp. 278–84.

Language

The Language of the Poems

As many readers of *Fortunes Stabilnes* have noted, much of Charles's language is simply good fifteenth-century English. If it were not, the poetry could rightfully be relegated to the category of obscure curiosity and forgotten. In considering the oddities of Charles's English, therefore, it is important to bear in mind that many stanzas read without any appreciable difficulty or sense of strangeness. In addition, a number of Charles's linguistic quirks are systematic, so that a knowledge of them and their causes will diminish the disruption they may cause to the flow of the verse.²⁷⁰ The difficulties of Charles's English spring from a variety of sources: (1) his inclination toward complex syntax; (2) his unusual, sometimes seemingly random, word order (perhaps an effect of the greater flexibility of French in this regard, because it was—and is—a more highly inflected language than English); (3) his willingness to use an "incorrect" form in order to produce a usable rhyme; (4) his imperfect grasp of register in English, resulting in a mixing of words, expressions, and proverbs which may be obscure to us because they were not thought properly to belong to the body of "literary language"; (5) his borrowing or invention of words when he knew of no appropriate word (as in his free use of prefixes to make new words); and (6) his evident confusion in the matter of such "mortar" of the language as conjunctions and prepositions, evidenced by his frequent use of them in given contexts not attested elsewhere.

Because the work exists in only one manuscript and that manuscript is probably at only one remove from the work of the poet himself, its spellings may reflect some of Charles's own spellings. Even in an age that lacked standardization, some spellings are little short of incredible. Charles (apparently) writes: *asise* (ashes), *enpresse* (*emprise*), *poore posse* (purpose), *sore* and *sowre* (swore, rhymes *tresowre*), *ben wayd* (bewailed), *fawkoun* (*facioun*), *ennysen* (*enseigne*), *shiiht* (shift?), *shrympe* (?), *reresse* (rehearse). These may, of course, not represent Charles's actual spellings but the scribe's interpretation of what he saw, but they are clearly

²⁷⁰ He uses some unusual expressions repeatedly, such as "set [n]o poynt ashore" (6268, 6181), a number of proverbial expressions with *shirt* (296, 494, 2775, 3199, 3346, 5364), and expressions involving pronouns, such as "that are it ye" (209), "hit am y, Age" (2558; Fr: "Je suis Aage"), "to chaunge it am not y" (4624), "nede y must ben he" (5759). For a longer list of related expressions see Steele and Day, xliii.

problematical (the scribe's spelling seems otherwise unremarkable). A number of the cruces and linguistic peculiarities in the work may in fact be due to the scribe's attempts to make sense of words he did not recognize. The spellings of Harley 682 are often not a very good guide to meaning, though they might, in the right hands, provide a guide to some of Charles's pronunciations.

How French is Charles's English? Though strong influence of French diction would not be surprising, it is difficult to generate a list of Gallicisms that is at all impressive. Given the fact that nonce borrowings from French were probably common, it is not easy to point to a significant French lexicon within Charles's English one.²⁷¹ There are a handful of such instances. It is true, however, that many French loan words have since been lost, making the poet's language look, at times, more Gallic than it really is.

The language is more clearly marked as the work of a foreigner by such things as the many uses of prepositions in certain collocations that are not otherwise attested; the over-use (perhaps misuse) of certain affixes (especially *for-*, *en-*, and *a-*) but also his frequent use of aphetic forms;²⁷² the opaque proverbs not attested elsewhere;²⁷³ and the occasionally tortured syntax.²⁷⁴ The frequently unusual stress patterns (*myssyn* "to come to an end," stressed on the second syllable) may point to unfamiliarity with the language, but more likely Charles was simply counting syllables (see above, "Versification").

The poet had at his disposal a number of one- and two-syllable words he could use to adjust his meter, among them *what*, *but what* (both used as exclamations), *lo*, *yea*, *certes*, *parde*, and *as*.²⁷⁵ His use

²⁷¹ I count a total of twelve French words unattested in fifteenth-century English (or one in more than fifty lines): *affoyle*, *delyuerment*, *departement* (separation), *deseraunce* (desire), *deservaunce* (deserving), *desperaunce* (despair), *gouvernement* (gouvernaunce), *oblyauunce*, *pancer*, *patise*, *pechere*, *seruaunce* (servant) (in addition *amverse*, though not attested in French, is probably a form of *enverse*). Of these, the ones ending in *-ment* and *-aunce* are simply skewed forms of words that are attested in English and are therefore easy to understand in context. It is difficult to believe that words like *affoyle* or *pancer* or *oblyauunce* would even sound "foreign" to English ears in the fifteenth century.

²⁷² Not unusual in English forms of French words (see Mossé, 37, par. 42).

²⁷³ On Charles's use of proverbs in his French poetry, see Champion, *Vie*, 648–50. Whiting and Whiting list a number of Charles's proverbs, citing only *Fortunes Stabilnes*. Three of Venus's proverbial statements find no entry in any proverb book I have consulted (lines 4779, 4783, and 5097), a shame because the poet uses them to characterize her (by their very commonness, I suspect).

²⁷⁴ See Pearsall, *Old English*, 217.

²⁷⁵ The two most common one-syllable words in this work (apart from

of exclamatory *but what!* is unusual (see line 322n). His *as*, too, is used more liberally and in more different syntactical positions than is usual in late medieval texts.²⁷⁶ *Lo* always seems to head the list of "padding words" held against the poet, but Marjorie Daunt, in her discussion of the usage of both Chaucer and Charles, defends his placement of the word as frequently meaningful.²⁷⁷ For instance, both poets sometimes use the word to add emphasis to the word or phrase that precedes it, as in "I here agraunt it, lo, vnto the free," where "lo," as it were, confirms the grant. It is true that many of these words and others like them helped the poet, in some cases, to turn octosyllabic French verse into decasyllabic English verse, but it does not follow that such words are therefore simply empty syllable markers with no lexical function in the verse.

The use of *to* (or *forto*, neither one to be translated) before the second of two verbs in the infinitive (when omitted before the first) was not unknown in Middle English (see OED, s.v. to B.V.19), but Charles makes unusual use of this sort of supposedly parallel construction.²⁷⁸

pronouns and prepositions) are probably *lo* and *as*. Charles uses both in different ways, many of them unfamiliar. He may insert *lo* between an adjective and noun (165) or use it to emphasize a word or phrase which immediately precedes or follows (or to draw out a line dramatically), as in lines 184 and 188. The word is often used in conjunction with *as* (*as lofo*: 45, 196, etc.), probably for the same purpose. In conjunction with *ywis*, it functions to add emphasis, as in line 67. Marjorie Daunt compares Charles's uses of *lo* with those of Chaucer ("Rhymes," 153-54). The frequency of the word in this work has probably been overestimated; it occurs 200 times, or an average of once in 46.7 lines, though its use is, admittedly, often concentrated in a few lines (as in the stanza beginning in 182). At other points Charles makes very little use of it.

²⁷⁶ A number of its uses were apparently influenced by French usage. The word *as* "occurs in a number of peculiar uses, often seemingly redundant" in Middle English, and "there is some reason to assume that *as* was not uncommon in Middle English colloquial speech" (Mustanoja, 331, 333; see 331-35; see also MED, s.v. *as*, also). According to Prins, "the use of redundant *as* seems to be based on French. There are French parallels in nearly all cases" (57-60; many of his English examples are taken from Chaucer). It is not necessary to assume in these cases that Charles was lapsing into French habits, however, as most were also used by the English poets of the late fourteenth century (see, e.g., 2865 and Mustanoja, 332). For a single lyric which contains a number of different constructions with *as*, see Roundel 9 (Charles uses this little word 839 times).

²⁷⁷ 153-54. Eleanor Hammond agrees (*English Verse*, 215). Charles's padding is as nothing compared with that of Lydgate.

²⁷⁸ An example of this construction is 2704-8, where "to take" is parallel to "rekwre" (see also 4105-6, 4876-77, 5371-72). A number of such constructions are noted in the commentary. In 5166 ("ye geve it hir and never forto change"),

In 2778–80, for example, he uses this construction with an imperative. As Steele and Day note, “this construction suggests that a foreigner is writing English” (2780n). In addition, the poet seems to have understood the prefix *be-* as a form of the verb “to be” (rather than as a prefix meaning “around”) and thus wrote *benway[ly]d, benfalle, benleue, benholde*, etc.²⁷⁹ Hammond speaks of the “easy command of English” evidenced in these poems,²⁸⁰ and despite all its peculiarities, the language often does flow naturally, as if their author were a fluent, if not always correct, speaker of English.

Summary of Forms

Though the regular noun plural is *-is* (*-ys, -es, -s*, occasionally *-en*), Charles sometimes omits the suffix to suit the rhyme.²⁸¹ The possessive occurs both with ending and without.²⁸² The regular spelling of the feminine pronoun is *she* (Revisors A and B: *sche*), rarely *hit*; the possessive form is *hir*, rarely *her*. *Hir* and *her* are also used rarely for *ther*; *thym* rarely for *hem* (or *them*). The pronoun is often used before the referent or repeated after it.²⁸³ On occasion Charles omits a required reflexive pronoun. The use of final inflectional *-e* in adjectives and adverbs is generally, but not always, correct.²⁸⁴

Though *-en* endings are attested for many verbs, they constitute

“*forto change*” must be some sort of absolute construction (see also 176–78).

²⁷⁹ These words are frequently written as two in the manuscript. Steele and Day state that the usual infinitive form in the first 500 lines is *be*; thereafter, *ben* (749n). In fact the 278 instances of *be* and the 138 instances of *ben* occur throughout the manuscript. The *ben* form is twice found in rhyme position (192 as *bene*, 1626; see also 3621, 3627). They go on to say that “the prefix is generally spelt ‘bi-’ in this MS., which suggests that an earlier form had the spelling ‘be-’” (749n). There are instances of forms that change in the course of the manuscript, but they must wait for a later investigation. (The scribe also writes *benware*.)

²⁸⁰ 214.

²⁸¹ See *woo* (5583), *terme* (5882). One double plural, *fetis*, appears in 4140.

²⁸² The genitives without ending include: *candil*, 5988; *candill*, 1807; *day*, 1714; *hert*, 2200; *heven*, 4091; *lady*, 157, 4469; *martir*, 285; *oxyan*, 1382; *pite*, 252; *servaunt*, 5532; *Phebus*, 2455.

²⁸³ E.g., “I haue . . . / Made . . . / And . . . the service and prayere / . . . haue songe hit hevly” (2297–2300; see Mustanoja, 132); “I shall hit spare . . . / All my quarell . . . / Mi wrath also and all myn yvill willyng” (1453–55); or “yowre trowth, gefe me hit, now we mete, / A pryve swet, swete cosse” (3834–35).

²⁸⁴ Adverbs may lack the ending (as in *abowt, soft, comyn, dredles, fast, last*) or may appear both with and without final *-e*. Adjectives which would have fallen into the OE weak declension often, but not always, lack final *-e* (as *swet*, 2241, *fressh*, 2202, etc.).

only a tiny minority of occurrences (often only a single instance). Second person singular verbs occasionally use *-ith* (*-ist/-yst* is the usual form).²⁸⁵ Third person singular occurs in a variety of forms: *-ith/-yth*, *-eth*, without ending, *-is/-ys*, *-es*, and rarely *-en*.²⁸⁶ In addition to the form without ending, the plural may occur with *-ith* or *-eth*.²⁸⁷ Subjunctive forms are generally without ending, but exceptions are *prevaylen* (3130), *staynyd* (5804), *bynden* [sing.] (4114). In addition to the usual endings on preterite forms of weak verbs, some occur without endings.²⁸⁸ Past participles occur more often without *y-* than with it; a variety of suffixes appear: *-id/-yd*, without ending, *-t*, *-(e)n*, *-ed*, *-e* (descending order of frequency). There is a tendency to drop the final *-d* of the participle before a following dental or vowel.²⁸⁹

Dialect

Fortunes Stabilnes was written in the first half of the fifteenth century in a Frenchman's English that is an unusual kind of "spontaneous *Mischsprache*."²⁹⁰ For that reason the work may (or may not) contain in some cases a better representation of the language as it was spoken (with fewer of the constraints imposed by the written language) than do many other linguistic documents. It will certainly be of interest to those working in the growing field of medieval translation.

It is not possible to identify Charles's dialect, if indeed he could be said to have one. The scribe did his best to impose a semblance of Chancery Standard on what he received from the duke, but his "tidying up" did not extend to some of the rhymes.²⁹¹ A few scattered

²⁸⁵ As *bryngith*, 2219, 4292, *spedith*, 4601.

²⁸⁶ See *bynden*, *semen*, *werken*. Individual words may take various endings.

²⁸⁷ See also *seyne* (say, 2149), *taken* (6203).

²⁸⁸ E.g., *Chaunge*, *start*, *karfe*, *stert*. (The spelling *-ed* is rare.) The plural rarely has *-en*.

²⁸⁹ E.g., *agarnesshe*, 1077, *bimase*, 4161.

²⁹⁰ The term was used of Charles's language by Jeremy Smith (private correspondence); the term *Mischsprache* is used by Benskin and Laing. Charles's English is unlike the material they discuss in that it is not an overlay or "mixture" of discrete sets of dialectal forms, but a genuine hodgepodge of forms that he gathered from random sources in learning the language.

²⁹¹ Jeremy Smith disagrees with Marjorie Daunt's conclusion that Charles's English is "distinctly conservative for the date at which he wrote" (private correspondence; Daunt, 147). Angus McIntosh suggested to me (based on the spelling of the manuscript) that the scribe may have come from the area of Northampton-Rugby (private correspondence); the scattering of Midland forms (such as *silf* and *lijf*) may therefore be attributable to the scribe rather than the author.

Northern words, such as *layre* (lore), *manaunce* (menace), *war/wer* (worse), *stere* (stir), and forms such as *whan* (when), *tan* (taken) point either to Charles's active acquisition of English during his stay at Pontefract in the early years of his captivity (1417–1419) or to his association with a person or persons who spoke Northern English during some stretch of years in which he was acquiring the English language actively. The former is entirely likely, as he seems to have gotten along well with his "hosts," accompanying the Waterton family and household on outings from the castle to Methley until the king put a stop to them.²⁹² On the whole, however, the language of the poems is not markedly dialectal.²⁹³

The Manuscripts

The work is extant in one manuscript, London, British Library MS. Harley 682 (H), which lacks the first and fourteenth quires. The remains of a single copy made from H around the middle of the fifteenth century (Ox) are to be found in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and the Cambridge University Library; a brief description of the two fragments follows the material on H. Brief information on manuscripts containing other English lyrics presumably by Charles of Orleans can be found in Appendix I.

Description of the Manuscript

Charles of Orleans, English poems 1439–1440

1. fols. 1r–147v. The god Cupide and venus the goddes / ... / To eftsome þt y may yow more biwray.

A single work in a variety of fixed and other verse forms on the subject of secular love.

2. fol. 148v. A record of the debt of one Tomas Pryor for a purchase of cloth.

²⁹² Ellis, *Original Letters*, 2.

²⁹³ For further examples and analysis, see Daunt, and Crow (89n). After an initial year and a half in and around London, Charles never got further south than Peterborough for any length of time for over twelve years.

fol. ii + 1-74, 74*, 75-148 + iii. Foliated in 1876 (first end flyleaf). Parchment, c. 196 x 142 mm. Thirty lines. Eighteen quires in eights and a final one in sixes. Collation: 1-19⁸ 20⁶ (-1.1-8, -14.1-8, -15.7 [a stub remains]). Unfinished: lacking capitals, rubrication, and decoration (see below). Binding: rebound in 1926 and again in 1969 (date inside back cover) in half red morocco with the Harley arms on both covers. Outsides of a number of quires show dirt and wear, indicating that the work remained unbound for some time after it was written. Parchment and ink: The parchment is good but not exceptional, with very few holes or discolorations. It is clean of hair follicles and generally evenly colored except for the last quire. The ink is dark brown, but pales occasionally to yellow, as on fol. 95r. Plates can be found in Steele and Day (frontispiece, fol. 134r) and Spence (*French Chansons*, preceding 1, fol. 61r).

Quire signatures probably occurred on 1-4 of every quire. Some thirty now remain, in quires *e*, *f*, *g*, *i*, *k*, *l*, *q*, *r*, and *s*, taking the form: leaf number + quire letter. From the fact that *e* is the fourth extant quire, it is apparent that a quire is missing prior to *e*.

| | Folio | Quire | Catchword |
|----|--------------|--------------|--|
| 1 | | [a] | [quire missing] |
| 2 | 1-8 | [b] | what þat |
| 3 | 9-16 | [c] | But what |
| 4 | 17-24 | [d] | In abidyng |
| 5 | 25-32 | e | This |
| 6 | 33-40 | f | Ther nys |
| 7 | 41-48 | g | Carfull |
| 8 | 49-56 | [h] | We shall |
| 9 | 57-64 | i | As oon |
| 10 | 65-72 | k | hit is |
| 11 | 73-79 | l | The greet [Folio 75 was missed in the numbering and afterward numbered 74*] |
| 12 | 80-87 | [m] | O fayre |
| 13 | 88-95 | [n] | Benyse |
| 14 | | [o] | [quire missing] |
| 15 | 96-102 | [χ] | [only stub of leaf following fol. 101 remains] |

| | | | |
|----|---------|-----|-------------|
| 16 | 103-110 | [p] | |
| 17 | 111-118 | q | On whiche |
| 18 | 119-126 | r | The chaunge |
| 19 | 127-134 | s | But |
| 20 | 135-142 | [t] | The whiche |
| 21 | 143-148 | [v] | |

As all catchwords prior to *e* are in order, it is apparent that the missing quire is *a*.²⁹⁴ The inaccuracy of the catchword on *n* and the lack of catchwords on χ may indicate that χ was added to the MS at a late stage (though *p* also lacks a catchword). The regular make-up of the rest of the MS (and the numbering of spaces for roundels in χ before the texts of the poems were written) indicates that these quires will also have been eights.

The present opening quire can be further identified as a unit by its much thinner parchment than the next; the parchment of the final quire is of markedly inferior quality to the rest. The identity of quires *n-p* and *r-t* is also established by the binding thread; quires *b-m* offer no further evidence of make-up. Hair faces hair, and flesh, flesh except in quire *p*, where the pattern is hf/hf/fh/fh/hf/hf/fh/fh.

Pricking and ruling: ruled throughout in ink. Four single compartment rules (three for fols. 65r-72r, which have no top ruling) the full length and width of the side, forming a written space of c. 128 x 72 mm, ruled for thirty line-spaces by means of roulette (not template) prickings in the outer margin. The horizontal bounding rules cross the fold. A pair of pricks was made for the lower bounding rule near the outer margins, then thirty lines were pricked for, starting at these pricks, upwards still nearer the margin. The upper bounding rule is on the top pricks, the vertical bounding rules have been separately pricked for in top and bottom margins. Text is written below top line.

Bifolia containing roundels were ruled at one go, which accounts for the fact that roundels of different lengths often have extra lines (usually one to three) ruled above them.²⁹⁵ In two cases (fols. 79v and 87v) extra lines were ruled, probably to accommodate unusually long roun-

²⁹⁴ For further support of this statement, see above, "Argument of the Poem," and discussion of marginal numbering in "Transmission History," below.

²⁹⁵ The missing leaf between fols. 101 and 102 would have been ruled (recto and verso) with fourteen lines as is its conjugate, fol. 97.

dels. Each roundel was intended to end at the bottom of the side. The first eight roundels, occupying the last four leaves of quire *i* (61r–64v) are written on fully-ruled leaves, as are 65r/72v (the outer leaf of *k*, probably ruled in error) and 103r (first leaf of *p*); in both cases this is because the ruling was made by bifolium rather than by folio. Up to fol. 95v, the place where the text of the roundel begins on these leaves is invariably marked by a horizontal stroke in blind. The lyric beginning in line 4485, written in dimeter, is laid out in three columns with double vertical rules between the columns at the bottom of the leaf (fol. 107r). An extra line is ruled at the bottom of 44v, from edge to edge, giving thirty-one lines.

Leaves 41–42, 47–48, 113–16, 119–28, and 133–34 show prickings, following the identical system, in the lower margin, which suggests that they were made for a manuscript in folio. Four of these show signatures (of the kind described above), viz. 4d on 114v, 2d on 121v, 1d on 122v, and 3d on 128v.²⁹⁶ This falls into a pattern showing that a quire *d* intended for a folio MS in fours was used to make the two inside leaves of quire *g*, the whole of quire *r*, and the two outside leaves of quire *s* of our MS. As most of the parchment in the MS is of the same color and quality (except for the first and last quires), it is probable that the whole batch was originally prepared for a folio volume which was not in fact made. It was later “rouletted” (Steele’s term) and prepared for use in a MS of half the size (that is, the present volume).²⁹⁷

Quires n, o, and χ and the plan of the roundel series:

The roundels are numbered, first in plummet, later in ink.²⁹⁸ Neither of these numberings is written by the scribe of the other arabic numbering in the manuscript (discussed below); these zeros are crossed from right to left, whereas other zeros in the manuscript are always crossed in the opposite direction. The two numberings are parallel as

²⁹⁶ Steele’s folio numbers are incorrect (xvi). These numbers are found in all cases on the verso of the leaf to prevent any confusion between them and the numbers relevant for the construction of this volume.

²⁹⁷ On differences between H and O in the order of a few ballades and roundels, see below, “Relation of Harley 682 to Charles’s Autograph Manuscript,” and 3311n.

²⁹⁸ It is not certain that the numbering in ink was done significantly later than that in plummet, and in fact, if I read Steele correctly, he suggests (xvii) that they may have been written by (my) Revisor B (see below). If this is true (and in light of the discussion below), it is probable that both A and B (if they were in fact two different people) were in Charles’s employ.

far as fol. 91v (4053), where the numbering in plummet is 62 and that in ink (correctly, according to what we now have) 63. The numbering then proceeds as follows:

| | Plummet | Ink |
|-----------------|---------|-----|
| fol. 92r (4066) | blank | 64 |
| 92v (4081) | 64 | 65 |
| fol. 93r (4095) | 65 | 66 |
| 93v (4109) | 66 | 67 |
| fol. 94r (4123) | 67 | 68 |
| 94v (4137) | blank | 69 |
| fol. 95r (4151) | 69 | 70 |
| 95v (4165) | 70 | 71 |

At this point the numbering in plummet ceases and that in ink, assuming a missing quire (*o*) after roundel 71, numbers the next roundel 87.²⁹⁹ This numbering proceeds without exception through 98; however, folios 100r (numbered 95) and 100v (96), 101r (97) and 101v (98) are devoid of text. A leaf has been cut out after fol. 101, but the stub retains the number 99 on the recto. Folios 102r, 102v, and 103r are unnumbered; all are ruled, but fol. 102r contains no text. Steele's numbering of roundels 101 and 102 is incorrect; they should be 102 and 103, if all blank and missing leaves are accounted for.

Codicological evidence seems to point to the loss of a quire *o* at some point, as well as the addition of a quire χ after the entire MS had been quired but before it was copied. The order of production was apparently as follows: the sheets were quired and ruled. Catchwords were added. At this point the discovery was made that there had been too few leaves allotted for roundels. An additional quire was made up, to take its place between *o* and *p*. The roundel numbers were inserted (probably to 100) and then corrected. The text was copied. This accounts for the fact that, though the catchwords do not match in this section, the numberings in ink include the missing quire (*o*) and continue into χ , even numbering leaves which had not yet received text.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ This quire, like *k*, must have contained a blank; one would expect the following quire to begin with 88.

³⁰⁰ And some leaves in fact never did. The fact that the outer leaf of *k*, which was fully ruled in error, was not exchanged for another leaf and saved for later use, but used for roundels in spite of the full-page ruling also suggests that the MS was entirely ruled before copying began.

There is further evidence of disruption of the original plan in this part of the volume.³⁰¹ Quire χ (and p , which follows it) has no catchword. The catchword "Be nyse" at the end of quire n (fol. 95v) does not match the "Thou shalt" of fol. 96r (χ), but it does match the "Be nyse" of fol. 96v. Given the unusual collocation of opening words, it is reasonable to assume that the "Be nyse" roundel (Roundel 87) may have originally belonged in the missing quire, but that some error or change of plan necessitated moving it to the early part of the following quire after the catchword was written. The existence of blank leaves numbered to receive roundels in χ confirms the assumption of a plan in a state of flux. It is clear from its content that the last roundel, occupying the first leaf of a quire, was designed to end the series.

Coupled with the fact that centuries of fixed-form lyrics were extremely common and that some leaves were left blank to receive roundels, this points to the likelihood that the scribe was waiting for poems not yet written (or not yet delivered) to complete the series.³⁰² Whether Charles was still writing roundels for the series at this time or whether he had simply not yet decided on their final order (or on which to include), it is clear that the scribe was at this point a bit ahead of him.

Scribal Layout of the Roundels

Each roundel is written at the bottom of a leaf with a varying number of (ruled) blank lines above it. The assumption that Charles must have intended to include musical notation in the manuscript has been based in large part on these apparently inexplicable spaces left above the chansons (in the French manuscript) and roundels and the discovery in an inventory of Charles's books of "quatre feuillets ou [sont] plusieurs Chansons notées."³⁰³ This was taken by Champion and others to be

³⁰¹ Two of the numbering systems (1 and 6, see below) show hiatus in quire n , hiatus which involve the remainder of the roundel series. Fol. 71r is ruled, but blank.

³⁰² The corresponding series in the autograph manuscript of chansons contains eighty-nine lyrics. It is possible that one or more unnumbered leaves were intended to receive some sort of decoration; the final two roundels (on unnumbered leaves) are here numbered 102 and 103 by codicological inference.

³⁰³ Champion, *La Librairie*, xxviii, xxxii (Laborde, vol. 3, inventory no. 6560: "ung autre petit livre ou sont plusieurs chansons notées"); see also Champion, *Le Manuscrit autographe*, 35–37; *Vie*, 235, 260–61. Champion's brief discussion of the relation of music and poetry since Machaut is accurate, but that the chansons were intended to be sung is not the inevitable conclusion of his argument. Champion reinforces this misconception by referring to "quelques pièces notées"

a *cahier* containing chansons from Charles's French work. Alice Planche suggests that Charles left blanks because he did not like "les musiques neuves" of his day.³⁰⁴

The theory that the spaces above each roundel were originally intended for music has no support. The layout of the text is not that chosen by scribes who are presenting words to music. In such cases, the two musical "structures" of the roundel are generally presented on staves at the top of the leaf, accompanied by the corresponding words of the opening of the poem (in the case of the fourteen-line lyric, four lines). The remainder of the poem occupies the bottom of the leaf. In *Le Manuscrit autographe*, Champion admitted that "cette disposition . . . pour inscrire un air de chanson est tout à fait anormale dans les chansonniers du quinzième siècle," but went on to suggest that perhaps the space was reserved for polyphonic music.³⁰⁵ His suggestion is difficult to understand, since such music requires a repetition of each musical line and so takes up much more space than monophonic music, whereas a number of the poems allow far too little space on the page even for monophonic music. Roundel 55, especially, occupies two-thirds of a fairly small written area, and is anyway composed in a lyric form which could never be fitted to the music of the chanson.³⁰⁶

Full-page lineation, where it occurs in the manuscript, is not intended to receive music, and music could not have been written on the

in Harley 682, by which he can only mean the rough sixteenth century (or later) notes added above the roundels on fols. 100–103 (*La Librairie*, lvi, n. 6). Sarah Spence claims that Champion showed that "the amount of space Charles had left corresponded exactly to the amount of space needed for music that would fit the lyrics," but she does not indicate where (*French Chansons*, 283).

³⁰⁴ She says that the blanks were not left because Charles was too lazy to have the program of the manuscript completed (as, she says, Champion believed), nor for reasons of economy, nor yet because of Charles's faith in the unaccompanied lyric ("Charles d'Orléans et la musique du silence," 447). Sarah Spence agrees with her in *Chansons*, xviii; but see her "French Chansons," 283–84 and n. 3. Nigel Wilkins first suggested to me that the idea of space left for music was perhaps incorrect. On the suggestion that Charles was himself a musician and for much interesting information on musical activity on both sides of the Channel, see Wilkins, "Music and Poetry."

³⁰⁵ 36n. For a description of the layout of Old French chansonniers, see Huot, *From Song to Book*, 47ff. For an example of the layout of polyphonic chansons, see the following facsimiles: *Album de Marguerite d'Autriche; Pavia, Biblioteca universitaria Aldini MS. 362* (this manuscript has associations with Charles's court at Blois); *Chansonnier Nivelle de la Chaussée*. For other comments on music and the chansons, see Champion, *La Librairie*, lvi.

³⁰⁶ The same is true for the lyrics in short lines at the beginning of folio 107v.

lineation we have on the leaf.³⁰⁷ In these instances, rather than with musical staves, the leaf was simply ruled from top to bottom to receive text, although the decision to place only one roundel in the lower half of each leaf may indicate that there were at one time plans for a series of decorations or miniatures of some kind above the roundels. What is more, a number of other poems in various forms (not roundels) receive the same treatment on the page (see below, "Relation of Harley 682 to Charles's Autograph Manuscript"). Some leaves that begin with a series of ruled, but blank, lines, mark significant beginnings and would probably have received decoration of some kind if the manuscript had been finished. Full-page lineation would have been no hindrance to a series of decorations or illuminations, as pictures were often painted on ruled parchment, and not only when the paintings were an afterthought.

Most late medieval manuscripts were first ruled in their entirety. Thus many folios with whole-page paintings were originally ruled, are contiguous with text folios in the gathering, and still show traces of the ruling through their paintwork.³⁰⁸

Sylvia Huot describes in some detail the illustrations of a series of Machaut's lyrics.³⁰⁹ Struck by the unlikelihood of illustrating lyric (rather than narrative) verse, she says,

It is in itself significant that the poems would have been illustrated even when there was, so to speak, nothing to illustrate except the voice itself. The *idea* of having the lays illuminated, rather than any visually suggestive aspect of the poems themselves, clearly motivated the work.³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ Fols. 61r–65r, 72v, 103r (and all of the chansons in Charles's manuscript of his French poems) are fully ruled. Sarah Spence provides plates of such leaves from each of the two manuscripts on facing pages (*French Chansons*, following xlii). Nancy Regalado arrived at many of the same conclusions independently of my work, but kindly made available to me at a late stage in the preparation of this book her forthcoming article, "En ce saint livre: Mise en page et identité lyrique dans les poèmes autographes de Villon dans l'album de Blois (Bibl. Nat. ms. fr. 25458)," in *L'Hôtellerie de Pensée*.

³⁰⁸ Byrne, 130. This contradicts Champion's assertion that "cette place ne peut avoir été réservée pour une miniature puisque le vélin est réglé" (*Le Manuscrit autographe*, 36n; see also Byrne, 119–22).

³⁰⁹ See *Song to Book*, "Le Remede de Fortune: A Poetic and Iconographic Analysis" and "The Iconography of the Lays in MS 1586: Carol or Compilation?" 249–73 (also 55–57, 74–76).

³¹⁰ 264–65 (italics mine). In Appendix B, a table of miniatures in selected

On the other hand, Nancy Regalado, after studying the manuscripts of Charles's French poems, has concluded that the blank spaces were not planned to include either music or decoration. She writes,

Ces espaces blancs dans l'album de Blois illustrent le principe courtois de la libéralité qui manifeste la puissance et l'appartenance par la largesse. Gaspiller ainsi une partie de la surface d'une page coûteuse, c'est faire preuve de libéralité: la mise en page élégante et généreuse de ce recueil correspond à la mode de la vie de cour.³¹¹

The fact that the copies of both Charles's autograph manuscript of the French poems (G and M) and of Harley 682 (Ox) contain the same blank spaces above the roundels/chansons would seem to support her hypothesis.

The Work of the Scribe and the Revisors

The uniform appearance of H belies the patchwork of its production history. What we have is in some cases little more than a rough draft; in others, heavily revised work. Charles handed these pieces (lyrics, sections of narrative verse) in their various states to a scribe who copied them. The manuscript is immediately interesting because of the extensive (and at a few points intensive) work of two revisors.³¹² Their

texts by Machaut, she lists, for instance:

line 1997 Hope sings from a scroll; l'Amant sleeps.
 2039 Hope places a ring on l'Amant's finger.
 2148 Hope addresses l'Amant.
 2287 L'Amant addresses Hope.
 2353 L'Amant bows to Hope.
 2403 Hope Addresses l'Amant.

and so forth (344). For a discussion of the subject of the illustration of lyric poetry in French and English manuscripts, see Boffey, chap. 2: "The Presentation of The Poems," 34-60. Nor was Machaut the first poet to elicit manuscript illumination to accompany his lyrics; Pierpont Morgan Library MS. M.819, a late thirteenth-century Italian manuscript, contains marginalia that represent the allegorical and emotional (as well as the imagistic and "narrative") content of troubadour lyrics (Huot, "Visualization").

³¹¹ "En ce saint livre," 17.

³¹² In fact the letter forms and spelling systems of the two hands are similar in many details, and Johan Gerritsen has suggested to me (perhaps as devil's advocate) that they might belong to the same person, writing in one case a current, in the other case a book, hand. If they were the same person, the question of priority would become irrelevant and the order of production of the manuscript would be simplified, but the question would remain, why does he (or she) erase and overwrite in the book hand (A), but enter changes in the current hand (B) by

work points up the fact that, however uniform the manuscript may be in appearance, it was copied by a neat (but occasionally inattentive) scribe who made the best he could of what he was given. Ralph Hanna speaks of the "confusions of unsupervised scribes when faced with messy 'foul papers,' whether revised or unrevised."³¹³ However well planned the work as a whole was, given the evident unevenness in revision, the scribe must have received a stack of work, in some cases single lyrics or small groups of lyrics on separate leaves, in some cases longer narrative pieces written in quires, all produced at different times and under different conditions, in more or less phonetic spelling and involving various corrections. "In such a situation," Hanna continues,

expunctions may be ignored, interlined and canceled readings fused, marginal additions overlooked, and those on inserted leaves misplaced. There are no very secure grounds for distinguishing scribal mishandlings of authorial lections from possible authorial rewritings or from hesitations in the initial process of composition.³¹⁴

This is the sort of situation in which H was apparently produced.

It is evident from both his French and English poems that Charles, though he corrected and revised, was not the sort of author given to careful correction, and the omission of many small words, as well as the strange spellings, may be due to his carelessness. In some cases the scribe shows a good deal of care, not only in the general neatness of his work but also in, for instance, his insertion of virgules between similar or identical words to indicate to the reader (or the next copyist?) that the repetition is no error. Some of the garbled passages suggest that he did his best to make sense of a messy wad of parchment pieces. Nevertheless, if many of the small omissions of pronouns, prepositions, articles, etc., are not his, he did not make a very concerted effort to make them up. In addition he miswrites many small words, perhaps through inattention, perhaps because he had some difficulty reading the copy he was given.³¹⁵

crossing out (rather than erasing) and entering new text either between lines or in the margins?

³¹³ 26. He is here generalizing about manuscript production rather than commenting on the copying of a particular manuscript.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.* The situation is complicated rather than simplified by the fact that only one copy of the work has survived.

³¹⁵ For a discussion of the scribe's punctuation, see my article, "Punctuation."

In addition to the work of the main scribe, extensive corrections and revisions were entered in two other hands, which I have labelled A and B. It is difficult to say positively whether Revisor A worked under Charles's direction. It is highly probable that he did, for B (who worked after him) certainly did.³¹⁶ Even if A did not, he was nevertheless an intelligent reader and a careful worker.³¹⁷ He generally erases very thoroughly before he enters a correction, which he places in the text line; it is impossible therefore to recover the original text in most cases.³¹⁸ He also seems to have completed a number of lines left incomplete by the main scribe, perhaps because the poet was stumped for rhymes (e.g., 904, 2141, 5088). His spellings, like those of B, differ from those of the main scribe.³¹⁹ Steele counts fifteen examples of the work of A, "nine in the first sequence and six in the Book of Jubilee."³²⁰ I think his revisions were much more extensive and have identified more than twice that number. The work of Revisor A is almost certainly prior to the work of Revisor B, for A never incorpo-

For a useful discussion of the nature of scribal variations in Chaucer's works and some of the reasons for them, see Windeatt, "Scribes."

³¹⁶ He may have numbered the roundels (the two sets of numberings are probably in the same hand). I have replaced Steele and Day's term "corrector" with "revisor" because many (though probably not all) of the changes made in the text were surely authorial in inspiration. The work of these revisors (if indeed there were two) should not therefore be treated simply as scribal alterations, but, at least in some cases, as authorial improvements of authorial readings. This should not be taken to mean that the authorial revisions are always superior (on whatever grounds) to the versions of phrases and lines found in the textual notes—in fact some revisions in the margins are erased—but simply that the printed text represents the *latest* version of the work from the author's hand.

³¹⁷ One bit of evidence that he did work for the duke is his correction in line 3746 of the characteristic Carolian expression, "but what." Though we cannot read the original, the revised version of line 1060 is close to the version Charles wrote in the French counterpart of this poem: "J'ay mis; mon cueur en est d'accort." It is possible to surmise from this that Corrector A is making authorized corrections, though the case is far from proven.

³¹⁸ On occasion Steele posits an under-reading that I cannot confirm. I have identified such cases in the notes with [S].

³¹⁹ For instance he writes *sche*, *schesse* (choose), *schepe* (ship), *schore* (score), *seche*, *thay*, *thare*, *hathe*, *freche* (fresh), *weche* (wish, which), *plessor* (pleasure), *destance*, *desdayn*, *wrofft* (wrought), *dryffte* (course). Steele postulates that these spellings are those of the author, perhaps because of some Northern forms among them (xxvii), though they are not in Charles's hand. For a paleographic description, see below.

³²⁰ He goes on to say, "there are no corrections in this hand in the second sequence" (xxviii).

rates B's marginalia. The only case in which both worked on the same line confirms this (see 3082n).

The work of Revisor B was carried out for Charles himself.³²¹ It consists of interlinear revision or correction, minor marginal revision, and (in eight cases) the revision of whole lines.³²² His work rectifies many errors and improves many lines, but his was not a really thorough revision—one reason for believing that he was not working for himself. All but two or three of the corrections are evident improvements, often involving the addition of omitted one-syllable words or the correction of pronoun reference.³²³ In some cases the changes are so slight ("ay" for "lo" in 585) that the change would seem to have made a difference only to the author. Some seem purely a matter of the author's taste, as in the revision of "so moche ygrowe" to "so smothe ygrowe" in 4671 (or in that of 5007). If the scribe himself made up the missing (but hypermetric) line at 5825, he was remarkably sensitive in matching the word patterning of the stanza. In two cases, Revisor B has replaced a line which translates the French with an entirely different line (781, 3359); it is difficult to see why a revisor working on his own would do this. Conversely, in lines 1519 and 1771 Revisor B actually brings the lines closer to the French versions. Taken together, the nature of the corrections points to someone working for the author. Steele counts sixty-nine entries by B, "forty-five in the first sequence, fourteen in the Book of Jubilee, and ten in the second sequence."³²⁴ As he does not identify them as such in his notes, his numbers are difficult to corroborate.³²⁵

Some poems were fairly thoroughly corrected or revised; others were obviously not.³²⁶ In spite of all the correction work, the text is still

³²¹ We know that Charles corrected his own work; there is plenty of evidence of that in his autograph manuscript.

³²² In a ninth case he inserts a line omitted by the main scribe (line 5827; Steele counts ten line-revisions). Revisor B nearly always uses carets both in the margin and in the line to indicate where the correction is to be read.

³²³ The fact that he occasionally wrote what seems like nonsense (*cave, pevechere, antys*) may in fact argue that he was copying someone else's suggestions rather than improving the text with his own.

³²⁴ xxviii.

³²⁵ I have counted fifty-seven entries and recorded them in the notes.

³²⁶ Presumably some lyrics were corrected on the leaf on which they were originally written and handed to the scribe in that form; others, in similar form, were not much more than drafts. For examples of heavily corrected lyrics, see Roundel 10, Ballade 57.

very rough in places, indicating that the poet probably never gave it a thorough revision. It is not possible, given what we know, to state with any certainty why this is the case (though the manuscript *is* unfinished). The many octosyllabic lines within decasyllabic poems, the omission of many small words, and the apparent miscopying of many more (e.g., *as* for *us*) may indicate that Charles was preoccupied with other matters toward the end of his captivity and had no time for polishing.³²⁷ He may, moreover, have been prevented by frequent moves in the final months of his captivity from giving the poems his sustained attention (see above, "Chronology"). This may also explain why the work was left behind in England when he returned to France.

Steele relegated the work of Revisors A and B to the textual notes, even though he acknowledged that the alterations (at least of the "second revision") "were made under Charles's eye."³²⁸ In the interest of presenting readers with what the author wrote in as close to its final form as possible, I have incorporated all of B's work into the text.³²⁹ Both because Revisor A probably had access to corrections by the author and because original readings are not generally recoverable, I have incorporated all of his corrections into the text as well. Though I have attempted, wherever possible, to identify the author of the corrections (main scribe, A, or B) in the textual notes, because it is not always possible to be certain of whose penwork one is studying, nothing should be inferred from a lack of identification in an individual note. In addition to these adjustments to the text, there are various instances of interference with the text in unidentifiable hands (see below, "Transmission History").

³²⁷ Though the care with which Charles preserved his autograph manuscript (and the carelessness with which he left Harley 682 behind in England) has often been remarked upon, Champion comments on Charles's lack of attention to detail even in his French work. In speaking of Charles's corrections in the autograph manuscript he says, "Tout cela avec une certaine nonchalance d'ailleurs, car le bon duc n'allait jamais au bout de ses entreprises et il ne finissait jamais rien" (*Poésies*, xix n. 2). Minor scribal errors and omissions are detailed in the explanatory notes.

³²⁸ xxvii. Even changes made by the main scribe are recorded at the bottom of the page, as in 2072, where Steele writes, "are corrected by overwriting to and." Steele's discussion of scribes and hands is potentially confusing. Revisor A's is the work Steele calls the third revision; to Revisor B he attributes the second revision. I am sure they worked in the reverse order. He seems to judge the value of each revision by its closeness to the French version (see 2248n).

³²⁹ There are a few exceptions in cases where I could make no sense of the corrections: *cave*, 2039; *pevechere* [v], 2508; 3082 (where A has erased original).

Paleographical Description

The main scribe writes an erect bastard hand with anglicana ductus but mainly secretary forms. The hand is compact and extremely regular, with well-formed letters and minimal use of hairstrokes or other flourishes. Anglicana forms include the two-compartment *a*, the complex form of *g*, and *h* in which the lower half is closed by a stroke to the right at the bottom of the first downstroke.³³⁰ The yogh is awkward, thin, and seldom used, and then only to save space. The well-formed thorn is used more regularly, though not usually. *I* and *y* usually, though not always, receive a "dot" in the form of a fine, slanted hairstroke. The scribe has no distinctive form of upper-case *h*, *y*, *l*, *v*, or *w*.

Revisor A writes a crude, formal hand, with the thick, tapering descenders (especially double *s* and *f*, the first of the two headless) that slant to the left and a straight-backed *d* that slants in the opposite direction, both typical of many French hands of this period. Descenders, especially on *y*, are short. His letter forms are sometimes erratic; he uses various forms of *d*, *h*, and *y*. His cramped, angular, and smallish letters are often written with very black ink and a not very well trimmed pen. Because he erases thoroughly and writes his corrections in the line, it is nearly impossible to recover original readings. In a number of cases he seems to have completed a line that had been left unfinished by the main scribe.

Revisor B writes a legible, more cursive hand than the main scribe, forming his sometimes tiny letters carefully in a fine, almost spidery hand. His final *s*, as well as his *r*, take the modern form; the descender of his *h* turns up. When replacing an entire line (in the margin), he sometimes writes in what might be called his book hand. He tends to erase or cross out very lightly and to place his corrections above the line or in the margins (usually with carets), allowing us to read the original version in most instances.³³¹

³³⁰ On the scribe's abbreviations, see Appendix IV.

³³¹ Sometimes marginal corrections are accompanied by a cross (as in the frontispiece), commonly placed in the margin to indicate the need for correction (see the anon. Palladius epilogue: "A now my lord biholdith on his book / For sothe al nought he gynnyth crossis make / With a plummet . . ." [Hammond, *English Verse*, 206]).

Transmission History

1) Six names are written in the margins of the MS:

In a sixteenth-century hand: "Elizabethhe Gelle" (struck through) (fol. 101v), and "Tomas Wyssedune" (fol. 75).³³² The first, written on a blank leaf, occurs in a draft of a letter:

Ihesus

Ryght welbeloffed Elizabeth gelle
 I hartely and loffyngly recumend me
 vn to yow glad to her off yowr welffar [?]and
 5 trvstyng yn hall myty god that yow be
 yn good helthe the cavs of my wrytyng to
 yow at thys tym I pray yow send me word
 whether yow be wylyng hor No hor ells I
 porpos ha Nother waye ther ffor I do
 10 yow to war for I dovt Nate for to be sped
 fful well and I tarre a whylle for hefare [= every]
 body moste tarre a spas and ther for
 I pray yow let me haff sum word a
 gen shortly and ther for I pray yow
 15 wythe Dely gens send me *sum*
 word of *yowr* mynd schortly
 or ellys I am de termyned
 a nother wayas for I ma not
 a byed here fare ye well
 20 my youre [?] wy

At the top of the next leaf the same hand has written "for nelle."

The second name (in the same hand) is accompanied by a macaronic text, which, like the letter above, begins in a sort of book hand but rapidly gives way to a more cursive script:

NoN coNturbetur cor vest[r]um Neque
 for my dethe spyrytum verytatys
 et gavde be the cor vestrum allelya alleya
 Tomas Wyssedune
 [pen trials]

³³² A number of marginal names and readings differ from those of Steele, who was apparently influenced by Wright's interpretations of marginalia (*Fontes Harliani*).

myserere mychy *domine* et exavdy
 of oracyonem de . . . for a pes [?] of
 fustons the pece ys ————xxijjd
 also be <ys> houre houre end & for remedie

The same person seems to have copied the first line of Roundel 92 at the top of fol. 99r (“as he that no thing may profyt”), as well as the opening of Roundel 69 at the top of fol. 95r (“The smylyng mouth and laughing The smy”).

In another sixteenth-century hand: “John Halesby” (fol. 95v). The words that follow, scrawled upside down, are nearly indecipherable:

Wy liue [?] relyond
 for john holowy c[?] peces
 odd j

In the lower margin in the same hand, part of the first line of Roundel 71 is copied (“lo myn hert what tolde”).

In another sixteenth-century hand: “Yohan~~ne~~ Tredecrofft” (and beneath it) “de Rycardi Holt” (fol. 111).

In another sixteenth-century hand: “Thomas Pryor” (fol. 148v). The name occurs in a bill or record of debt. A large discoloration has rendered it largely undecipherable except in ultraviolet light, but an old photograph bound into the back of the manuscript (about which no information is available) is much more legible. The record is five lines long, of which (with the help of Johan Gerritsen) I have been able to read only the following:

. . . tomas Pryor ows
 me ffor ij elles off hollond clothe
 the price yerof a nell ———— viijd the
 summe yer of all ———— xvjd

These notations would seem to suggest that the manuscript was at some point in the hands of people associated with the cloth industry. One “John Holloway, clothworker,” is mentioned in a deed written in Coventry in 1677.³³³ (On the face of it, Coventry seems too far from London to be convincing, but further investigation may turn up significant links.)

³³³ Alcock, 45.

2) Three shelfmarks appear on folio 1r:

173 (top left, ink): shelfmark of Edward Stillingfleet (1635–1699, royal chaplain, popular London preacher, dean of St. Paul's, antiquary, and bishop of Worcester). Harley 7644 (1685), the catalogue of Stillingfleet's library, contains the following entry: "173 MS in Old English Poetry (Incip.) The God Cupid & Venus the Goddess MSS in Perga." The appearance of this shelfmark on the first folio of the extant MS indicates that the first folio was lost before the mid-seventeenth century.³³⁴

60 [crossed out] 59.A.18 and below it 682. (top center, ink): shelfmark of Robert Harley (a number of MSS in the series had shelfmarks that were apparently off by one, which he—or more likely his librarian Humphrey Wanley—corrected). Harley bought Stillingfleet's manuscripts in 1707.³³⁵ Addit. 45,703, Harley's catalogue³³⁶ contains the following entry on fol. 13: "59.A.18. A Parchment-book in 4to containing divers old English Love-Poems celebrating a Lady beloved by Charles Duke of Orleans, who was Prisoner in England, in the Time of K. Henry."³³⁷

7/VI A (top right, pencil): former British Library shelfmark.

3) Other marginal notations include:

39v, 40r, 41r (lower margin): a series of comments on the poems above, largely erased and indecipherable, in a sixteenth-century hand. On 39v (4 lines) I read: "... hy lyve a fer ffrom al plaiser as anny on alyve ..."; on 40r (4 lines): "... and sayd that dethe had takyn ... of alle his world ..."; on 41r (one line): "anoder gen hys complaint w ... eche" [*w* above line with caret].

103r (three lines of music with words, the second copying the first, probably all sixteenth century):

³³⁴ Efforts to trace Stillingfleet's purchase of the MS have to date been unavailing. The MS is entirely untypical of the books he owned (e.g., B.L. MSS. Harley 665–904, 939–51, 964–1038), which perhaps implies that he acquired it in a batch of other material that interested him more.

³³⁵ Wright, *Diary*, xix, xxviii, and *Fontes Harleiani*, 316.

³³⁶ *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum, e Bibliotheca Reverendis Doctissimi viri Edwardi Stillingfleeti haud ita pridem Wigorniensis Episcopi emptorum* (dated 6 May 1710).

³³⁷ The entry in the revised and corrected *Catalogue of Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum* adds only "K. Henry the Fifth."

myserere mihi domine et exsady <x>
myserere mychy domine et exhody
oracyone yn de . . .

103v (in blank above text, 4 lines in a hand not found elsewhere in the MS):

Ethyopum terras iam feruida torruit estas
In cancro solis dum voluitur aureus axis
Silua prata virent frondent nunc
omnia rident.

In the margins of H are no fewer than eight series of marginal numberings, some of which have mystified the scholars to whom I have shown them, including those who have worked with large numbers of comparable manuscripts. Only one of the numberings is clearly a record of work done by a scribe for receipt of payment. Two others are simply attempts to number the roundels (see discussion of quires *n*, *o*, and χ above). None of the remaining five has been adequately explained. None are printers' casting-off marks.³³⁸ As it seems impossible to ascertain when the notations were inserted (though some are clearly early), it is difficult to know if they are of any importance in the transmission history of the text. One useful piece of information, however, can be gleaned from them: by projecting the counting intervals backwards (as Steele knew), it becomes clear that the missing first quire must have contained about 394 lines.³³⁹ (The corresponding

³³⁸ The numberings consist of:

1. a dash in the left margin every 64 lines;
2. a 10, 20, 30 count, the numbers placed at intervals of 80, 80, and 96 lines (256-line "takes");
3. a cross in a circle (at 256-line intervals);
4. a cross in a circle plus a triangle pointing to the right, at 256-line intervals (correction of 3);
5. a cross in a circle plus a triangle plus a point, at 256-line intervals (apparently to distinguish 3 from 4);
6. a count by sevens (tens in the roundels, hundreds marked by Cs), for payment of a scribe;
7. numbering of the roundels in plummet;
8. numbering of the roundels in ink (on 7 and 8, see above). All the numberings, in the left margin, are sometimes inaccurate. Steele, who details the numberings somewhat inaccurately and incompletely (xvi-xvii), seems to assume that numbering six was made for payment of Harley 682; more likely, it was made for payment of a copy of this MS. For a manuscript which may be comparable, see Manly-Rickert, 513.

³³⁹ xvi-xvii. This rules out the suggestion made at the beginning of Steele and

French material, "La retenue d'amours," fills 400 lines.)

Relation of Harley 682 (H) to Charles's Autograph Manuscript (O)

Charles's personal copy of his French poems (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS. fr. 25458), written partly in his own hand, bears a number of similarities to H. The two manuscripts are of similar size and shape. According to Champion, O, like H, is in gatherings of eights.³⁴⁰ The order of the poems is substantially the same (but unlike that of any of the other French manuscripts). In particular, a handful of ballades in the French autograph manuscript are renumbered in the margin. Daniel Poirion has suggested that Charles corrected his copyist, who transcribed the French poems in the wrong order.³⁴¹ The order of the English poems follows this corrected order, but none of the copies of the French manuscript take account of it. In addition, a disarrangement of the roundels in H is explainable on codicological grounds, and, properly rearranged, they follow exactly the same order as the French chansons (see 3311n).

A comparison of the layout of H with O reveals many similarities and a few differences in conception. Precisely because the two manuscripts were written by different scribes, their similarities imply that one (probably H) was laid out on the model of the other. The decorated initials were completed in O, though other decoration (for instance, above the *chansons*) was never finished. The patent from the God of Love and Venus begins at the top of 1r in H, whereas it runs on from the end of the opening allegory (14) in O; at the end of the patent in each manuscript, however, the remainder of the leaf is blank.³⁴²

The layout of the ballades was conceived differently by the two scribes. The scribe of H (with one exception) makes little attempt to

Day's notes that perhaps the omission of the opening allegory "was the deliberate act of Charles himself, since he wrote an entirely new introduction, ll. 56–202, in its place, feeling perhaps the difficulty of representing himself as a shy, inexperienced youth" (261). Whatever his reason for composing the verse following the letter patent, it was not to replace the opening allegory.

³⁴⁰ *Le Manuscrit autographe*, 13.

³⁴¹ "Création poétique," 190 (see above, "Authorship").

³⁴² Perhaps, as Johan Gerritsen once suggested to me, the blank was left for (a painting of) the seal attached to the patent. Such playfulness would be appropriate to Charles's style and temperament. The narrative that follows in H (omitted in O) begins at the top of a new leaf and ends at the bottom of another. O is paginated.

adjust the ballade to the leaf, breaking the text wherever it is convenient. The scribe of O tries (often unsuccessfully) to write one ballade per side; if he encounters a long ballade that spills onto a second side, he either leaves the remainder of the second side blank (Ballade IX) or attempts to squeeze all of the following ballade into the remaining space (Ballade IV).³⁴³ Since both manuscripts are about the same size and are ruled for thirty lines per side, this means that the O scribe cannot leave space between stanzas (though he sometimes leaves space for an envoy that was never added). In addition, he uses two headings fairly consistently: "Balade" and "Lenvoy." The scribe of H begins by copying O's layout; the first seven ballades are run together without any blank lines. He apparently found this layout not to his liking, however, for beginning with Ballade 8 he left two spaces between ballades and one between stanzas (he uses no headings).

The scribe of H was confronted with the opening of the second vision in the middle of 49r, so he simply left the usual two blank lines and continued the text. At the same point, the scribe of O had only three lines remaining on the side (99) and so wrote the heading "Songe en complainte" in the top margin of the following leaf. That he did not feel strongly about beginning new sections of poetry other than fixed form lyrics on blank leaves, however, is evidenced by his placing "La Requeste" (the petition) at the bottom of 105 with only two lines remaining for text.³⁴⁴ The spacing of the opening of the petition (2716) and the opening and closing of the letter to Cupid (2982-3045) are treated almost identically by the two copyists.³⁴⁵ That the scribe of H omits all headings may point to their source in O as scribal.

The roundel/chanson sequences, like the (first) ballade sequences, each begin on a new leaf. In the French manuscript the chansons do not follow the withdrawal from the service of love (the "Balades de plusieurs propos" intervene), but they do begin a new quire. The chansons are laid out in the same way that the roundels are—with one chanson/roundel at the bottom of each side—but the chanson leaves in

³⁴³ This plan results in various makeshift solutions. Ballade VIII is thirty lines long (including the heading "Balade" and the following blank line), so the heading "Lenvoy" is squeezed into the margin.

³⁴⁴ Similarly, he begins "La departie damour en Balades" in the middle of the leaf (109) and the "Copie de la quittance dessus dicte" (112) near the bottom.

³⁴⁵ The "narrative ballades" that follow receive the usual heading "Balade" in the French, but no heading (as usual) in the English. Once again, the French scribe attempts to copy one ballade per side.

O are all ruled for thirty lines, whereas in H only those leaves that belong to the quires adjoining the ones containing the roundels (*i* and *p*) are fully ruled.³⁴⁶

The one significant difference in conception is that the scribe of H apparently left room for decoration or illumination (or simply for the luxury of empty space) at points in the manuscript other than on the leaves of roundels, including 14 blank lines at the top of the first leaf of ballades (203), 15 lines before the "saying of grace" (4319), 12 lines between 4388 and 4389 (the "grace" and the "washing"), 19 lines before the tiny three-stanza lyric written in three parallel columns (4486), a number of lines before each of the ensuing lyrics (4505 [14], 4520 [14], 4537 [14], 4553 [11], 4569 [8], 4591 [8], 4613 [5]), and 15 lines at the beginning of the second dream vision (4638). From this point on, the layout of H is entirely unremarkable, with no special treatment given to the ballade on Fortune (4680) or the end of the second dream vision (the second ballade sequence begins below the middle of fol. 124v).

The general impression H makes, with narrative or linking sections of verse sometimes ending at the bottom of a leaf, sometimes with the last few lines left blank, and lyric sequences sometimes beginning on new leaves, is that of a fairly well-planned manuscript, produced with one eye on the autograph manuscript, but with some differences based on scribal taste (the spacing between stanzas and omission of headings), others based on authorial decisions (the inclusion of more decoration), very few loose ends, but a substantial mix-up near the end of the roundel series (see the description of the manuscript, above).

The autograph manuscript contains nine lyrics in English (eight roundels and one ballade), none of which appear in H.³⁴⁷ These nine lyrics appear as a group in the manuscript, and were surely written after (perhaps long after) Charles returned to France.³⁴⁸ The fact that the

³⁴⁶ One side of the outer bifolium of *k* (65r/72v) was apparently ruled in error.

³⁴⁷ See Appendix I. The ballade also occurs in the Oxford manuscript Bodleian Fairfax 16, fol. 321; one of the roundels appears in B.L. MS. Royal 16 F.ii, fol. 69r, along with two others attributed to the duke which appear nowhere else.

³⁴⁸ Steele suggests that they may possibly have been intended to make up (some of) the "missing" roundels of the English series and says, "the personal character of two of them will explain their absence," but he gives no evidence for this hypothesis (xxxii, n.). Steele and Day further suggest that Charles may have taken them home from England with him, citing items 39 and 44 in the inventory of goods taken to France in 1440 (see line 3138n): "the first, two quires of ballades, the second, four leaves of *Chansons notées*" (see Champion, *La Librairie*,

spelling systems differ markedly from that of the Harley scribe should come as no surprise, since two poems were written by Charles himself, without a scribe to "correct" his spelling, and the rest were written by a French scribe.³⁴⁹ It is no evasion to suggest that their awkwardness may be attributed to the author's long residence in France, where he had little use for the language he learned in England. Many questions surrounding these poems have yet to be answered. I have included them here only because they complete the extant *oeuvre* of Charles of Orleans in English (Appendix I), but I have not attempted to address the many questions their appearance in the autograph manuscript raises.

The "Oxbridge" Manuscript (Ox)

Two fragments of a single copy on parchment of *Fortunes Stabilnes* made from H have survived. The two leaves of this manuscript that Thomas Rawlinson gave Thomas Hearne (which had in the meantime been used as pastedowns), Hearne pasted into volume thirty-eight of his *Diaries* on 3 September 1712.³⁵⁰ They contain Roundels 9, 10, 15, and 16.³⁵¹ The other fragment of two leaves, which had also been used as pastedowns, survives as Cambridge University Library MS. Additional 2585 (1).³⁵² They contain Roundels 5 and 6 and Ballades 59 and 60 (sans envoy).³⁵³

Ox was a finished manuscript; the initials are rubricated. The manuscript is ruled for thirty (or thirty-one) lines. The roundel pages

xxvii-xxviii). For reasons expressed earlier, neither is likely to be a sheaf of Charles's roundels.

³⁴⁹ Jansen has determined that the odd error in line two of the ballade was the result of the French scribe's mistaking an ampersand for an English word and writing "to se fro" ("Fairfax Poems," 218; see Appendix I, no. 7).

³⁵⁰ Oxford, Bodleian Lib. MS. Hearne's *Diaries* 38, fols. 261-64. They are transcribed inaccurately by Bliss (265-67) but much more accurately by Hausknecht.

³⁵¹ As in H, Roundels 9 and 10 and Roundels 15 and 16 each occupy recto and verso of one leaf.

³⁵² Formerly Additional MS. 4047 (Item 20). In the case of the Cambridge fragment, we know that the leaves were used in binding the *Sphaera Ioannis de Sacro Bosco* (Paris, 1561), because the shelfmark (M-11-62) survives on one of the leaves. For more detailed information and a generally accurate transcription of this fragment see Rossell Hope Robbins, "Fragments." Robbins was the first to realize that the fragments were at one time part of the same manuscript.

³⁵³ Ballades 59 and 60 are laid out exactly as in H, with one line of Ballade 59 running onto the top of the verso and the first three stanzas of Ballade 60 filling the rest of the leaf. Roundels 5 and 6 occupy the recto and verso of fol. 63 in H.

are fully ruled, although, as in H, the roundels are relegated to the bottom of each leaf.³⁵⁴ Falconer Madan dated the Hearne fragment from the writing as c. 1430–1440. R. H. Robbins suggests that, if H is dated 1440, “the Cambridge–Bodleian hand, which is surely contemporary (with somewhat more flourishes in the capitals), can best be dated near 1450.”³⁵⁵ The Oxbridge scribe made a few slight but generally systematic changes to his original (presumably H): final *y* into *i* (sometimes *e*), *i* into *e*, *k* into *c*, and *gh* into *z*.³⁵⁶

The scribe of the Hearne fragment took the corrections (at least of B) as authorial. B corrected line 3271 (“In hir he shall se gret larges”) by adding “a” above the line with a caret before “gret” and “and hvug” above the line with a caret before “larges” (giving: “In hir he shall se a gret and hvug larges”). Because there was no other space, he wrote “hvug” after “larges” rather than together with “and.” The scribe of Ox decided to copy the corrections of B, but, not realizing that the caret placed before “larges” marked the place for both words, he wrote “and larges hugi” (perhaps trying to make a rhyme with “goodly” in the following line) in place of “and huge larges.” He also takes over the marginal replacement of a whole line by B in 3359.³⁵⁷

Without bringing other kinds of evidence to bear, it is difficult to say more than that Ox was probably made very soon after H. The hands are similar in many ways and the spelling systems are remarkably similar.³⁵⁸ The poems of the Hearne fragment are glossed in a later hand; the Cambridge fragments are not glossed, but do contain marginal comments in Latin. The two fragments seem to have led quite different afterlives. More work obviously remains to be done on these fragments.

Editorial Principles

I have worked throughout this edition on the principle that editing is by nature interpretation. I have therefore not attempted to hide the fact,

³⁵⁴ It is interesting that the scribe followed the layout of H in this regard (as did Charles’s secretary in his Latin translation; see Champion, *Poésies*, xv); as in H and O, the top half of each roundel leaf is left tantalizingly blank. Did the Oxbridge scribe know what the space was being left for, or was he following his exemplar slavishly? (Robbins, like so many others, suggests it is for music, but see above, “Layout of the Roundels”).

³⁵⁵ 503.

³⁵⁶ For examples see Robbins (“Fragments,” 503).

³⁵⁷ He takes over the correction of “are” to “and” in 2072 as well.

³⁵⁸ Robbins, 503.

but to highlight it. I do not think it is possible to edit invisibly; the final result will always and by definition show evidence of the cultural and other biases of the editor. It has seemed to me more useful, therefore, to make my biases as clear as possible, so that the reader can enter into them or avoid them as he wishes. To that end, I offer a detailed description of my presentation of the text, I discuss various interpretations of individual passages in the explanatory notes (including suggestions for alternative punctuation), and I offer some options in the glossary. I have thereby attempted to close off as few avenues as possible to the reader with a lively imagination and intelligence who "would have read it differently."

I have taken my cue in this from E. Talbot Donaldson, whose essay on "The Psychology of Editors of Middle English Texts" has seemed to me to be both honest and sensible. He says there, for instance, "this situation [of doubting the MS reading] seems to me to impose on an editor the responsibility to print, in his text, where no one can miss it, the reading he considers right."³⁵⁹ Refusing to interpret (by presenting an unpunctuated text, for instance, or neglecting to record emendations the editor believes would recover the original meaning of the text) would, I feel, simply result in further neglect of these poems. Interpreting the text without making clear that I am interpreting would be dishonest, and, in those cases where I have doubts, I have not hesitated to express them. I have in all cases tried to present what I think Charles wrote, to be aware of my own interpretive acts, and to point them out to the reader. My highest priority has been to provide a trustworthy text and an apparatus from which it is possible to determine (as exactly as possible) what the manuscript says.

Presentation of the Text

I have chosen to enhance the accessibility of these poems by adding modern punctuation (eschewing only the apostrophe, as is customary). I have punctuated the text solely to make it easier to read (i.e., I have not necessarily pointed logically, but, where appropriate, rhetorically).³⁶⁰ While attempting to add no superfluous punctuation, I have

³⁵⁹ *Speaking of Chaucer*, chap. 7, 118.

³⁶⁰ I have not usually set off the word *lo(o)* by commas because it seems often to be used simply to take the place of an otherwise syncopated syllable. The use of commas would throw the word into greater relief than the rhetoric demands. I have, however, surrounded it by commas when not to do so would cause some possible reading difficulty.

not hesitated to punctuate "dramatically," with frequent use of the dash, the exclamation point, and parentheses. The poetry itself seems to call for such punctuation: sentences are sometimes left unfinished, speakers change frequently, asides abound, and lamentation rises on every side. To attempt to make do with commas and periods alone would be to try to build a house using only a hammer and screw-driver.³⁶¹

Because the work exists in a unique manuscript, I have taken the opportunity to provide material in the textual notes which would normally not find a place there. In addition to recording scribal corrections and revisions and my emendations, I have recorded the locations of scribal corrections, variants from the Oxbridge manuscript (see above), and identification of correcting hands (where possible).³⁶²

The paraphrases at the foot of the page should not be mistaken for literal translations. In some cases I have attempted to convey both the sense and tone of the original; in others I have tried to indicate as economically as possible the drift of a statement, sometimes doing violence to the Middle English syntax in the process (where an exact explanation would be cumbersome) and often sacrificing elegance for clarity. A literal translation must be constructed from the glossary in all cases.

Despite my giving the text a modern look by the addition of punctuation, I have otherwise been conservative in my treatment of it. I have maintained original spelling, including thorn and yogh. Word division has been regularized conservatively.³⁶³ I have emended only where I was convinced some sort of error was involved. I have therefore left "swete avise" stand for "suit to devise" (156) and "preysid" for

³⁶¹ Some readers will object to the addition of punctuation on principle as "interpretation" of the text. I fully realize that in many, many instances I might have punctuated particular lines differently, in some cases revealing slightly different meanings (for example, lines 519-28). On the other hand, the diplomatic text is difficult enough to have deterred many readers (and teachers) from enjoying the work. Once the cruces have been identified and thrashed out, there will be a place for an extremely lightly punctuated text for general use. In the meantime, purists can use the Steele and Day text, which is still generally available.

³⁶² The textual notes follow the explanatory notes in this volume because it was not possible to print them on the text pages. The advantage of this arrangement is an uncluttered page, and the brevity of the notes minimizes the inconvenience of having to consult them there.

³⁶³ For manuscript word division, see Appendix III and Steele and Day.

“pressed” (166) because these spellings are recorded in the fifteenth century. In such cases, I have glossed the easily misreadable word or phrase at the foot of the page.

Abbreviations have been expanded silently, since Steele has indicated them in his edition.³⁶⁴ Spellings chosen for the expansions are brought into line with those found elsewhere in the manuscript. The scribe favors *yr* following *u* (except in the word *euery*), whereas after *v* he may use either *ir*, *yr*, or in some cases *er*; I have tried to follow this preference in expanding abbreviations except where the text shows another spelling of a particular word (usually a compound) to have been used more or less consistently (see Appendix IV).

I have taken over the scribe’s formatting of the text in most cases, but have deviated from it in the following ways: I have (1) numbered the ballades; (2) consistently spaced between stanzas where the scribe fails to do so and omitted other blank lines (these are indicated in the explanatory notes); (3) regularized the use of large capitals at the openings of stanzas and the capitalization of the letter following each large capital; and (4) written out the refrains of roundels.

(1) In addition to the ballade numbering, at the end of each lyric or narrative section the reader will find either a reference to the corresponding French poem in Champion’s edition or an indication that the poem has no French counterpart.

(2) Ruled or unruled spaces (listed in “The Relation of Harley 682 to Charles’s Autograph Manuscript,” above), are not reproduced in the text but are included in the notes. Manuscript spaces above the roundels are not reproduced. I have spaced between units originally marking musical phrases (in the MS. marked only by one-line capitals).

(3) In the matter of capitalization, I have followed in parallel two different courses. I have capitalized the first word of every line, even though the scribe does not have in his repertoire a capital form of *h*, *k*, *y*, *l*, *v*, or *w*, and occasionally simply slips up. It is clear that the scribe intended to capitalize the first word of every line (including the first

³⁶⁴ For a list of corrections of Steele’s text see Appendix III (but note that he represents marginal corrections at the bottom of the page, not in his text, which accounts for numerous differences between our texts). Because final *e* is usually not pronounced, crossed (final) double *l* has not been treated as an abbreviation for *-lle* (though those instances where Steele does not record it are noted); the reader may add a final *e* mentally if he or she desires. In a handful of other cases I have treated the tittle as otiose as well; such instances can be found in the textual notes.

letter following a capital two or more lines high), and his (rare) failure to do so (or writing of a second capital after a space for a single-line capital) has no further implications for the study of the manuscript or the text.³⁶⁵ In addition, I have interpreted initial *ff* as the scribe's form of *F*. Because the scribe does have a small form of *j*, e.g., in *lijf*, *catijf*, and in numbers (*vij*), I have not regularized the small forms of *ij*. For the sake of consistency, I have therefore printed the (much less frequent) single capital form for both *I* and *Ĵ* in the manuscript as *I*.

I have sometimes modernized the scribe's usage of capitals at points other than the beginnings of lines. The one exception to this is the first person singular pronoun: inasmuch as the scribe nearly always uses *y*, it seemed to me to clutter the page inordinately to capitalize it throughout. I have therefore left it as a small letter except at the beginning of a line or sentence (where the scribe writes *D*). I have generally capitalized *God* except in the phrase *god wot* and a few other tags.

In many cases it is difficult to know when Charles intends a noun to act as a personification and when he does not; the poems are full of very weak personifications. Because the setting off of such "quasi-personifications" often makes the syntax of his sentence more readily transparent, I have chosen to capitalize them whenever I saw in them a possibility of personification (i.e., in general, whenever they "act" in some way). Medieval readers could choose for themselves how to interpret them (and probably no two readers interpreted them in exactly the same way), but then medieval readers were much more accustomed to the style of this poetry than are modern readers. As in all matters of punctuation and layout, it is pointless to argue that medieval readers had a different page before them; they also read with different eyes.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁵ Instances in which he neglects to capitalize the letter following a two or three-line capital (except for *h*, *y*, *l*, *v*, *w*, which have no capital forms, and letters which are doubled or ligatured) are: 1076, 1601, 1629, 2716, 3180, 3250, 3447, 3503, 3531, 3545, 3559, 3601, 3803, 4011, 4053, 4151, 4235, 4736, 5408, 5464, 5784, 5980 (see also 4015n).

³⁶⁶ Another example of interference by punctuation is the enclosing in quotation marks of proverbs. On the one hand, one might argue, we would not need quotation marks around the proverbs familiar to us (You can't tell him anything—like father, like son.), and so it would seem superfluous to do so to medieval proverbs. On the other hand, quotation marks provide the readiest method of indicating *on the page* that the literal sense of the line in question is (or may be) problematical for a special reason—a reason that quotation marks make immediately evident. Having chosen this course, it was of course necessary to enclose *all*

(4) There is little in the way of editorial precedent to guide the editor in laying out the roundel (never a popular form in English) on the page. Nigel Wilkins has provided valuable information for the layout of *rondeaux* that were written to fit musical forms, and his arguments can be applied to the English roundels.³⁶⁷ Since neither the syntactic structure nor the scribal layout seems to contradict the musical structure (which is not to say that these poems were written to be sung), I have laid out the roundels according to Wilkins's suggestions (see above, "The Roundel"). Italicizing the expanded refrains is not merely an overly-precise antiquarian touch. I have worked throughout to maintain Steele and Day's line numbering in order to make cross-referencing easy. I have therefore presented all implied but unwritten refrain material in italics, thereby both clarifying what actually exists in the manuscript and retaining Steele and Day's line numbering.

Steele and Day created titles for a number of the segments of verse that make up *Fortunes Stabilnes* and divided the whole work into four parts (numbered as three). In keeping with their deep interest in the relation between the French and English poems, they headed each section (or poem) with a reference to the corresponding French text. They numbered each lyric prominently and headed each one with a reference to the corresponding French poem. I have chosen, rather, to limit the intrusion on the page of either structural demarcations or references to another body of poetry. Titles of sections have been kept as descriptive as possible and are to be found only in the Table of Contents. Ballade and roundel numbers have been placed as unobtrusively as possible on the page. References to French counterparts follow each lyric or narrative section.³⁶⁸

proverbs in quotation marks in order not to imply a difference between those with which we are familiar and the others. My guiding principle in all such decisions was to place the best, most transparent reading as close at hand as possible. Though this is not a painless text to read, it is the best compromise I could devise in order to provide a genuinely medieval text to a late twentieth-century reader of Middle English, or in other words, to present a reading experience as close to that of the work's original audience as possible, without alienating the (experienced) reader.

³⁶⁷ "Structure of Ballades, Rondeaux," 337-48. For an example of Wilkins's editorial presentation, see his *One Hundred Ballades*, 114-16. Note that the roundels correspond to *chansons* and not to *rondeaux*. Charles wrote both in French, primarily *chansons* while he was in England, but *rondeaux* almost exclusively after he returned to France.

³⁶⁸ The roundels are numbered in the manuscript; the ballades are not.

Emendations, which are very few, are surrounded by [] if they supply something missing, and by < > if they change an extant reading. Both are recorded in the textual notes (except where an entire word has been supplied) and all are mentioned in the explanatory notes. Scribal revisions are likewise recorded in the textual notes and, where possible, identified as work of the main scribe, [Revisor] A, or [Revisor] B.

Fortunes Stables

[Summary of contents of missing first quire,
extant only in the French:]

When Nature first created me, says the narrator, she first gave me into the governance of Childhood (*Enfance*); later a messenger called Age (in this case something like Growing Up), under orders from Nature, transferred me to the care of Youth (*Jennesse*).¹ Early one Valentine's Day morning, Youth awakens the narrator and announces that he must go to meet a certain lord (*un seigneur*). The narrator humbly asks who this may be, but when Youth tells him that it is the God of Love, he declares he is too young and begs to be allowed to put off this service, which he has heard will bring him pain (*tourmens*).

Youth insists, painting a glowing picture of the joys of love, but adds that the choice is his. The narrator answers graciously that he will obey her this time, but that she must promise that neither he nor his heart will be coerced into anything. Youth promises that she will not force his heart to do anything, but that Beauty will change his mind.

The narrator dresses, and the two make their way to Love's castle (*manoir*). Youth announces to the porter (*Compaignie*) that she has brought Charles, *duc d'Orlians*; the porter opens the gate immediately, welcomes them, and announces them to Venus and Cupid. The porter returns with Fair Welcome (*Bel Acueil*) and *Plaisance*, and all four accompany the narrator to the presence of the *Roy souverain*, where his courtiers are dancing and singing. They kneel. Youth presents Charles, "de la mason de France, / Creu ou jardin semé de fleur de lis," to Cupid, the God of Love.

Love welcomes him, saying that he knew his father and many others of his lineage, who served him well,² and asks if he has ever been

¹ *Jennesse* represents the proper age for love, an age governed by Venus, according to Froissart (see introduction, "Sources and Influences: English," n. 28). Goodrich is thus mistaken in thinking that "Orleans represents himself as a child still with his governess whom he calls 'maistresse'" (*Themes*, 83).

² Charles's father, Louis, was by all accounts a brilliant, handsome man; this

pierced by love's dart (though the young man, he thinks, looks too young). "Come closer," says Cupid, "let us discuss this."

His heart trembling, the narrator asks Love to be kind. Cupid answers that he cannot leave until he falls in love. Cupid calls forth *Plaisant Beauté* and orders her to assail the narrator, to keep him from rest or sleep, just as she dealt with Samson and Solomon. Beauty tells him sweetly that he must obey Love and then sends an arrow through his eyes into his heart. This rouses (*esveillier*) his heart, which feels happy. The narrator rebukes his eyes and asks his heart to remove the dart, but it is too late. The lover laments: he hates his life and desires death, he hates his eyes and his heart, and he hates the arrow.

Blaming both the God of Love and Beauty,³ he falls suffering (*malade*) at the feet of Love, apparently dead. The god laughs, taunting him with his weakness ("You should see yourself in a mirror!"). Youth intercedes to ask for a respite, but Cupid refuses until the lover surrenders.

Beauty lifts the lover's head and places it in her lap (saying, "I arrest you with these hands"), counselling him once again to surrender, and the lover does so (addressing her as "young, gentle princess without peer"), asking for pity. Beauty then intercedes on his behalf. Cupid (*Amours*) responds by giving the lover into her hands, commanding her to subject him completely to her will. Beauty then teaches the lover the ten rules (*poins*) of love:

1. serve Love loyally in spite of your suffering;
2. put your heart in one place; love one lady with your whole will, without desiring to change (or divide) your allegiance;
3. guard your countenance and your manner in keeping Love's secrets;
4. never boast of Love's favors.

These are the most important, but there are six more rules:

1. be *jolis* (joyous, agreeable, well turned out);

may be the son's tribute to his father's obvious sexual presence.

³ Much has been made of the possible identity of one "Lady Beauty," presumed by Champion to be Bonne d'Armagnac, Charles's second wife, and by Steele to be Maud, Countess of Arundel (xxxiv). In fact *Bewte* is never used as a form of address (i.e., a name) in the ballade sequence, and here, as the personification who teaches the narrator about love, she is simply a borrowing from the *Romance of the Rose*.

2. be exceedingly courteous and gracious;
3. seek honor and pursue valor;
4. be generous;
5. seek out the company of people of honor;
6. sixth and last, be a diligent scholar in Love's school; learn the arts of love: how to make music, dance, write (*faire*) songs, rhyme ballades, etc. These are the ten commandments of the God of Love.

With his hands on a book, the lover promises to serve loyally and to keep the commandments of love willingly.⁴ The God of Love commands Good Faith (*Bonne Foy*), his chief secretary, to write a letter patent (*Lettre de retenue*), which, sealed by Loyalty with the seal of Love, is then delivered to the lover. The God of Love retains the lover's heart, however, *en gage*. When the lover protests that he needs his heart, Love responds that his physician, Hope, will keep him from dying until he is able to obtain one to replace it.

[Here the extant text begins:]

⁴ For a description of the gestures involved in the ceremonies of homage and fealty, see Stock, 50-51.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>THe god Cupide and Venus the goddes Whiche power han on all worldly gladnes: We hertly gretynge sende of oure humbles To louers alle, Doyng yow wite the duk that folkis calle Of Orlyauce, we him amyttte and shall As oure seruaunt, which hath but yeris small Of yowthe yit spent, And we haue him assignyd on oure rent The fayrist penciouun aftir his entent Forto enyoy bi oure lettir patent While he good lust; Hopyng forto fynde him trewe and iust, As in oure part, that we no thing dislust Him to auance (lo, this we trust In yowre entent); Wherfore we gyve strait comaundement To alle whiche ben as of oure parlement Him forto helpe and ayde in eche turnement In all they may, Without disdayne or any frawdying way— As ye ben glad oure plesure <to> obey, In forfetyng (now herkyn what y say)</p> | <p>f 1r</p> <p>5</p> <p>10</p> <p>15</p> <p>20</p> |
|---|--|

5 The paraphrases are in no way intended to diminish or obviate the reader's need to use the glossary. They are provided to help the reader with syntax and word order and to clarify passages in which the spellings of the text might lead him or her astray. As they are often free, the accomplished reader of Middle English is invited to disregard them.

Informing you (that)

9 out of our revenues

12 as long as he pleases

13–16 Hoping to find him loyal and honorable to us, we entrust to your attention that we do not at all lack the desire to advance him

23 On pain of forfeiting . . .

Bothe good and bode—
 Him to susteyne in his necessite 25
 Ageyn Desdayn and his affynyte
 (Cursid Daunger and wickid Ielowse
 And fals Dissayt),
 For thorough envyous sleightis they awayt
 Mi trewe folk to hurt and to affayt, 30
 Of which that he is on, in my consayt, f 1v
 Syn he is swore
 As me to serue eche othir wight tofore,
 Not only now but his lyue euyrmore,
 To payne him silf for any greef or sore 35
 In his seruage;
 For sewrte more, he leuys in morgage
 His hert, without disdayne of corage,
 Not to refuse in thenkyng it bondage
 (The more biholde 40
 Ar we to hem, god wot, a thousand fold!);
 Wherfore he shall not say he hath myssold
 As his good will—Crist forbede þat he shuld,
 Hit were fowl doone!—
 But for ensample most abone 45
 To cause yong folk to loue more sone;
 That causith as this: we him gardone
 Vndir oure seele,
 Wherfore as loo bileue yow wele,
 Oure feodaries or counselle, 50
 We this haue doon not to repele
 In no manere.
 Gyve on the day of Seynt Valentyn þe martere
 As in the Castell of Humbill Desere
 As for the tyme oure counsell holdyng here. 55
Ch. 14, lines 401–57

25 “to susteyne” is parallel to “forto helpe and ayde” (19).

31 Of which followers he [Charles] is one, in my opinion,

37–39 As a stronger pledge, he leaves his heart as security without thinking it beneath him [and showing it by] refusing [to part with his heart] because he considered it [i.e., feudal tenure] servitude

47–48 That [i.e., his setting such a good example] causes this: we reward him

49–51 Wherefore, our retainers and council, believe that we have enacted this not [with the intention that it is] to be withdrawn

WHen in myn hond was tan me þis patent f 2r
 I seide, "My lord, O verry god puysshaunt,
 Of pryncis prince, O prince most excellent,
 For all the world is to yow obeyschaunt,
 I, poore wrecche, bicomen yowre servaunt; 60
 Mi witt so dulle hyt ys and y vntaught
 That y kan not athanke yow as y aught,

"**F**or to my will my tunge kan not suffise;
 Twene ioy and woo my gost supposid is
 As this to thynke and this oft to avise 65
 My witt as now so renneth this and this,
 But as humbly y thanke yow lo ywis,
 As kan be thought in any maner hert
 —Or more, if more that reson kan aduert,

"**O**f that as loo hit likith yowre good grace 70
 Me to reward more then y am worth[y],
 For which that y, while y haue lyvis space,
 Mi sely will shall shewe to do trewly
 Yowre plesore. Sely will? Nay, verily,
 Mi grettist will shall be forto deserue 75
 What ye haue doon, not now, but to y sterue.

"**<Sterve>**? Fy, my speche hit squarith oft,
 For though y wolde, allas, hit may not be
 Deth to take, for hit suffisith nought,
 For of the deth ye haue revid me 80
 That in me now as nys ther lijf, parde,
 But even the self lijf ye haue me lent,
 This may y not <deserue>, in myn entent

59–60 because all the world is obedient to you, I . . . have become your servant
 63–66 Because my tongue cannot express my will; my spirit is placed between joy and woe, that is, I think this [one joyful thing] and then consider this [something woeful], my mind now races to and fro so much
 70–74 Because it pleases your highness . . . in return for that I . . . will teach my humble will to do faithfully that which pleases you. . . . [see note]
 76 what you have given [me], not [only] now, but till I die.
 78–79 For though I wish to, alas, it is not possible to suffer death, for it is not permitted
 81 so that there is no life in me now . . .
 83–84 in my opinion, I do not deserve this [my treatment] at your hands, . . .

“That ye haue doon, but Ihesu wis me so
 That what y do may be to yowre plesere. 85
 And if y euyr wilfully as loo f 2v
 Yow do offence, the seluen houre martere
 Mot y bicome, y myghti God requere,
 For well y wott that kan me not bitide
 Though that y lyuyd a thousand worldis wide; 90

“Wherfore as this biseche y yow licence
 Me forto graunt, as of yowre nobill grace,
 To sewe, aftir my childisshe ynnocense,
 As for myn hert an othir to purchase,
 Whereas ye haue betake myn for a space. 95
 A space? Ye, for while y lijf endure
 I gete it not ageyne, this am y sure!

“Yit oon persone as <oon> hert doth suffise;
 What nede is hit to haue more then ynough?
 Me thynketh hit were an vngoodly gise 100
 To hoker moker hertis. Wote ye how?
 I mene as this: when they be <gyven> you
 And ye bitake a thousand on body
 That on lust not depart, fy, nygardy!

“Alas! what shulde it to my lady greue 105
 Though that y kepe her hert while sche dethe myn?
 Bet were hit so then suffir me myscheve
 As for my trouthe, this wot ye well and fyne,
 They not preuayle though y my silf forpyne;
 To hate for loue hit were to fowle a syn, 110
 Me thynkith now, in case as y am yn.”

91–94 For this reason I beg you to grant me permission . . . to petition . . . to obtain another heart to replace mine

98 Yet [for] one person one heart suffices

101 to hoard hearts . . . when they are given to you

105 . . . what harm would it do my lady

107–9 That would be better than to cause me to endure misery in return for my loyalty, you know that very well; she does not profit [from keeping it even] though I torture myself [i.e., it causes me great pain].

The god Cupide as therwith lokid sad
 And to me seide, "Ahim, what wanton hyt!
 I wende right well atamyd ben thou had,
 But well y fele as now thou lakkist witt, 115
 For this y woll thou knowe: how that hyt sitt f 3r
 The forto like in what is my plesere;
 And where as that thou seidist to me here

"How y a thousand hertis take to on
 As forto kepe, y gesse y do it well. 120
 Shuld she hir hert depart to euerichon?
 Nay, sir, let be, right neuyr a dele!
 Take which she lust best, wilt thou entirmelle?
 Lete hir leue the remenaunt me biside
 And y shall well as for ther ese provide. 125

"Suche wordis leue, hit is but foltisshenes,
 And go thi wey to purchase . . . now let see . . .
 To wynne the hert of thi lady maystres,
 For as for thyn, y take it hir, Bewte,
 And yit she lete it ly twene hir and me, 130
 As thou mayst se, as yit she doth it wayfe,
 As she were loth more then hir owen <ressayue>.

"But and thou kanst hir othir wise conquere,
 I woll be glad to helpe the as y kan.
 Let se how that thou kanst thi servise bere. 135
 Remembir the, thou art a gentill man;
 Aftir that <scol>, so, loke thou folow than,
 For thou shalt wite that ther be scolis thre
 As in owyng not al of oon degre:

"For gentill must be wonne with gentiles, 140

113 . . . "Well, how unruly you are!"

116-17 . . . that it is fitting for you to be content with what pleases me

119 how I give a thousand hearts to one person

123-4 If she takes the one she likes best, will you interfere? Let her leave the rest with me.

129-30 for as for your heart, I gave it to her: Beauty, and she lets it lie . . .

132 As if she were loathe to receive more than was her due.

Bi goodly speche and curteys countenaunce.
 The more that they ben sett as in nobles,
 The more assure thee in thi gouernaunce;
 Tyme to speke and not payse in balaunce,
 For to nobles longith sewte of curteys speche 145
 As he fynt tyme bi mouth or writyng seche. f 3v

“**T**he marchaunt wijf—nay, þe doughtir of burgeys—
 With giftis grete to fresshe them in aray
 So maist thou when ther faouere best, y gesse,
 But, what, a cherlis doughtir dawbid in clay 150
 As strokis grete (not tippe nor tapp, do way!),
 But loke who that most fowlist kan bigynne
 The rewdisshe child so best lo shall he wynne,

“**B**ut as for the, thou must do othirwise,
 For y haue gyven thyn hert to othir place. 155
 Go forth thi wey sum goodly swete avise,
 So as thou kan, to gete thi lady grace;
 For, as for me, y shall in euery case
 (As y haue seide) the helpe in what y may.
 Now fare thou well, y kan no bettir say.” 160

And so he him withdrew forto disport
 And y myn eye to Bewte threw afer
 And sawe right well about hir stood a sort
 That y, god wot, ne koude devise a wer,
 For gret Disdayne and crewell lo Daungere 165

143–46 The higher they are set in nobility [the more noble they are], the more [carefully] you should control your behavior; the time to speak and [the time] to remain silent is very important [i.e., may tip the scales], for to nobility belongs petitioning in courtly terms, as he [the suitor] finds time to entreat [the lady] in person or in writing

149–52 in this way you can best win their favor . . . but . . . [you can win] . . . a churl's daughter . . . with heavy blows (don't bother with mere taps!) but whoever begins [does it] most harshly

155–156 for I have bestowed your heart on [one of] another [higher] social rank. . . some pleasing suit devise

159 . . . help you in any way I can

163–64 . . . that she was surrounded by [such] a company that I . . . could not think of a worse [one].

They preysid hir so nygh and round about
That, what for drede, not durste y in þat rowt

(Not for myn hed!) oo word vnto hir say
Lest that they wolde my mater ouyrthrowe,
And well y thought if that myn hert so lay 170
In suche a plite as myght y right well knowe,
That, to myn harme, retourne hit wold & growe,
For Loue wolde that Bewte shulde it kepe,
And she was loth, for Pite was aslepe.

Then thought y me was best to make a bill 175
Bisechyng Bewte of hir benygne grace f 4r
Mi poore hert that she not suffir spill
But forto kepe as for a tymys space
Vnto y may hir faouere more purchase,
For wold she graunt me to kepe it euyrmore 180
Then were y hool of many a greuous sore,

And, if she wolde more ferre of goodlihede,
To leue me not as man without hert
But graunt me loo, liche to a pynnys hed,
Part of hiris to that my rewd desert 185
To graunt me more as may hir lo conuert
And as me thought in this that y no blame
Deseruyd lo for which to do the same.

166 they pressed so closely about her

169–72 lest they thwart my enterprise, and I thought certainly if my heart lay in such a plight as I knew it surely to do, it would return to me [rather than stay with my lady] and grow [back into my body], to my great sorrow

175–88 The two stanzas, taken together, make one statement. The bill in 175 returns in 188, and “biseching” (176) governs “that she not suffir spill / But forto kepe and To leue me not . . . But graunt me.” “Forto kepe” (178) is parallel to “spill” (177).

179–80 until I might obtain more of her favor, for if she would grant me that she would keep it forever

182–88 And [bisechyng her], if she wished, of her grace, to go further, not to leave me a man without a heart, but to grant me some of hers (even a pinhead’s-worth) until my worth (which is small on account of my inexperience) may change her mind [and cause her] to grant me more, and it seemed to me that I deserved no blame in this matter for doing the same [i.e., making the bill].

I me withdrewē and callid vnto me Hope
 Out of the prese into an herber grene 190
 As in my childisse witt if y koude grope
 Sum praty thing that myght hir plesere bene,
 But even liche as hit were a swarme of bene,
 So gan ther thoughtis to me multiply
 To helpe me fynde, if they koude, remedy. 195

Good Hope, as loo, was no thing to seche,
 For penne and papir had he found anoon.
 "A trouthe," quod y, "here lakkith not but Speche
 And Konnyng, but allas they be my foon."
 "O tewche!" quod Hope, "so as thou kanst, do on, 200
 Forwhi Good Will, hit may thi case preuayle
 For which that y bigan all this trauayle."

No French

B1

Most goodly fayre aboue alle þo lyuyng, f 4v
 I yow biseche that ye lust pardone me
 (I, wrecchedist wrecche, yowre grace here abidyng); 205
 This forto say me dryvith necessite,
 Forwhi y may no lenger hide, parde,
 But that ye nede must knowen my distres,
 For all my comfort lo that are it ye;
 So ben ye sowl my lady and maystres. 210

My greef to playne, albe y not konnyng,
 Loue causith this my nakid wordis fle,
 For yowre servaunt bicome y lo beyng
 (God helpe me so) the first tyme that y see
 How ye excellid alle othir in bewte 215
 That, as me thought, all worldly lo gladnes

191 To see if I could find anything in my puerile mind

196 Good Hope was not hard to find

201–2 for Good Will, for whom I went to all this trouble in the first place, may help your case. "hit" repeats "Good Will."

211–15 Although I am not skillful in expressing my grief, Love causes them to take flight, for I became your servant, submitting, . . . the first time I saw how you surpassed all others in beauty, [so that]

Were me bifalle, yowre servaunt forto be,
So ben ye sowl my lady and maystres.

Of gyft y dar not axe so gret a thing f 5r
Of yow, bicause y knowe me not worthe, 220
But fro this tyme, my lijf forth dewryng,
If that ye lust graunt me yowre seruce fre,
That wolde y axe withouten wage or fee:
In yowre seruyce to spende my lustynes,
No more y wisse nor axe in no degre, 225
So ben ye sowl my lady and maystres.

Allas, madame, as wakith yowre pite
And me forgyve as of my symples,
Which am yowre man my lyuys quantite,
So ben ye sowl my lady and maystres. 230
Ch. 17, B I

As plesith yow yowre eyen to pressen B2
And cast them me no more, my ladi bright,
For when ye me biholde, the self sesoun
(Bi verry god!) ye sle me lo vpright,
Which ourthrowith myn hert in such a plight 235
That what to doon not wot y well ywis.
Without yowre helpe to deth þus am y dight,
Myn only ioye and souereyne hertis blis.

Not dar y yow desire, for no chesoun,
To gyue yowre hert to me, but what as right 240
If ye lust doon, me thynke hit were resoun
I had yowre hert toforne eche othir wight
Syn ye haue myn (als, shewe[th] it lo at sight
That without hert not may y leven this),

222 If it please you to permit me [to enter] your service without hindrance

231–32 Please imprison your eyes and cast them in my direction no more

239–41 I would not dare to ask you . . . but if you want to deal justly (with me), it seems reasonable to me

243 . . . (moreover, it appears at a glance [i.e., it is obvious] that . . .) “it” is the subject of “shewe” (probably a scribal error for *sheweth*).

But geyne yowre will not kan y stryue nor fight, 245
Myn only ioye and souereyne hertis blis.

I am to bold to holde this opynyoun,
But on my gilt as lete yowre mercy light,
Syn that yowre plesaunt body and fawkoun f 5v
Hath me thus tane maugre all my might 250
For prisoner, abidyng day and nyght
Yowre pite sewt of which if that y mys
The terme as of my deth then is it pight,
Myn only ioy and souereyne hertis blis.

So sore me werieth Loue that y afright, 255
Madame, as lo my sewte wherfore it is
To holde my silf yowre sely poore knyght,
Myn only ioye and souereyne hertis blis.

Ch. 18, B II

Gret perill is in hasty biholdyng; B3
Such thyng as may encause a body dye, 260
All kan it not ben had the eschewyng
Though hit be wrong, right, witt or foly.
When Plesaunce cometh vnto an hert lusty,
A yong desire and fresshe with hir bryngyng,
To let his hert, who hath ther then konnyng 265
But he woll sende þe sight out of Fraunchise?
This comyn cometh—hit is no straunge þing—
As well to foolis as vnto folkis wise.

Whiche eyen brynge of þat þei haue seyng
A report so gracious and goodly 270
Vnto the hert, which gyvith his heryng
Therto, which doth him loue so feruently

247 I am too bold in holding this opinion

251–53 . . . awaiting day and night your pity [that I have] sued for, which, if I lack [it] (i.e., you do not pity me), the time of my death is then fixed

261–62 Although avoiding it is impossible, whether it be wrong or right . . .

265–66 who then has the skill to stop his heart? but he [the heart] will send the eyes freely

That he kan not eschewe to sende him spy
 Eft for sumwhat that may be his likyng
 Which byndith him for all his lijf, beyng 275
 Hert and body to Loue and his servise
 (This comyn cometh—hit is no straunge þing—
 As well to foolis as vnto folkis wise),

Which causith oft full paynfull abidyng f 6r
 Or he may passe the gate of Iupardy 280
 (The tyme so long, vnsewre the releuyng)
 As of Comfort to fynden remedy
 Which slepith oft as in a nede trewly,
 For who to Loue that geveth attendyng
 A martir lijf he hath most resemblyng, 285
 Which greef is more then to be maddid twyse!
 This comyn cometh (hit is no straunge thing)
 As well to foolis as vnto folkis wise.

☉ God of Loue, ne takith displesyng,
 Though that y say as y haue knowlechyng 290
 As of yowre bond the rage and gret luyse;
 This comyn cometh (hit is no straunge thing)
 As wele to foolis as vnto folkis wise.

Ch. 19, B III

B4

How may he him diffende, þe pouer hert,
 Ageyn two eyen when they vpon him light, 295
 Which nakid is withouten cloth or shert,
 Where in Plesere the eyen are armyd bright?
 As wepen noon kan helpe, y yow bihight,
 So nygh they are of Louys allyaunce,
 For ther nys wight may stond geyne þer pusshaunce. 300

275–76 . . . submitting heart and body . . .

282–85 to get relief from Comfort, who often sleeps when one needs him badly, for whoever attends on Love, he has a life most resembling that of a martyr


289–91 . . . do not take offense, though I say that I know the madness and the punishment of your domination

Then must he deye or yelde him as cowert
 (For to gret shame is flight for any wight)
 Or manly to abide his grevous smert
 To that, aswowne, he ourthrowe vpright
 And so ben yelde, but what bihouyth fight? 305
 Bet is hit yelde him to ther gouernaunce,
 For ther nys wight may stonde geyne þer pusshaunce.

That hit is this ye do right well aduert,
 Mi lady dere, to me, yowre scomfitid knyght, f 6v
 For, in good trouthe, y myght it not astert; 310
 When ye the dart of Loue vnto me pight
 Thorough out myn eye, not knew y day nor night;
 So was y brought (no wondir) to vttraunce
 For ther nys wight may stonde geyn þer pusshaunce.

If that myn harme to yow preuaylen myght, 315
 Yit shulde y then agre with my greuaunce
 Which y haue tane as thorough myn eye sight,
 For ther nys wight may stonde geyne þer pusshaunce.

Ch. 20, B IV

 Fayre madame, yowre goodli lookis spare,
 Yowre wordis, eek, so full of curtese, 320
 For, Ihesu <wot>, they harme (and ye vnware)
 Mi foltisse hert; but what, if so that ye
 As my request lust not graunten me
 In losyng of my gret aduersite,
 As lete me goon with myn vnhappy chaunce 325
 Without more assaut to passen fre
 Which y haue for yowre plesaunt acqueyntaunce.

This wolde y swere (but vnnethe lo y dare):
 That gretly wrongith Loue yowre crewelte
 Syn that ye smote me with the dart of Kare 330

304–5 until, in a swoon, he fall headlong to the ground and so submit, but what use is fighting?

329 that your cruelty wrongs Love greatly

And me forto comfort ye lust not see;
 I trowe ye caste y shulde a martir be.
 But wolde God to fele ye myght ben she
 On of the stechis lest of my greuauce,
 But fy! allas! hit were to gret pite 335
 Which y haue for yowre plesaunt acqueyntaunce!

What haue y doon offense that ye so are
 Glad me to sle? Alak! am y not he
 Ye brought to Loue? and wolde y square? f 7r
 Ye woll not lete me that in no degre 340
 To gyue me pese (hit hurt yow not, parde!)
 Or graunt me ellis as my desire, in fee;
 This woll be spoke yow shame, no vallyaunce:
 That to my trouthe ye shewe no bounte
 Which y haue for yowre plesaunt acqueyntaunce. 345

☉ fayre madame, now lefith this fantase;
 As graunt me pese or, with yowre grace, auance
 That y might say, "O what felicite
 Which y haue for yowre plesaunt acqueyntaunce!"
Ch. 21, B V

N Ot long agoo y hyed me apase B6
 In secret wise myn hert forto counsayle 350
 Him silf forto withdrawe as for a space
 Out of Louys paynfull thought and trauayle,
 To which he seide me, "Nay, sett there a nayle!
 Speke me no more therof, y hertly pray, 355
 For, god wot, to loue y shall me payne,

333–35 But I wish to God you might be the one to feel one of the tiniest pricks of my misery, but fie! alas! it is too much distress

337 What offense have I committed . . .

339–44 . . . and would I complain? You will neither release me even a tiny bit in order to give me peace . . . nor grant me my desire . . . ; this will be spoken of to your shame, not to your merit, that in return for my loyalty. . . "Lete" (340) is parallel to "graunt" (342).

347 grant me peace or . . . assist [me]

354 [in answer] to which he said to me, "No, I stop at that!"

For y haue chose the fayrist that be may,
As me reportid hath myn eyen twayne.”

“Now pardone me,” y seide, “as in this case
Forwhi y say hit for oure bothe avayle 360
With all the power that god well in me hase,
That in good trouthe thou dost me to mervayle!
Seest thou not well that Fortune doth vs fayle?
Hast thou good lust to lyue in sorow?” “Nay,
Iwis,” he seide, “y trust more to attayne. 365
I had a praty look yit yestirday,
As me reportid hath myn eyen twayne.”

“**A**llas!” seide y, “thou fonnyst, as haue y grace,
That for oon look thi lijf lust to biwayle! f 7v 370
For countenance or lookis of hir face
Knowist thou hir thou3t?! Ye, cast me lo a kayle!”
“O pese!” quod he, “now, good, y lust not rayle
Nor y bileue no word thou dost me say,
For trewly serue y shall and neuyr fayne
Of good which is the best—leue this aray!— 375
As me reportid hath myn eyen twayne.”

☉ ywis, madame, in this maner aray
Myn hert and y thus haue ye brost atwayne;
But what, swete hert, as gide vs such a way
As me reportid hath myn eyen twayne. 380
Ch. 22, B VI

Neuyr more to loue oft haue y thought,
So ouyrchargith me my greef and payne,
For in this world was neuyr wight ywrou3t
That euyr Loue more grevid, dar y sayne,

B7

361 with all the power that good will in me has
370–71 Can you read her thoughts by her manner or her facial expressions?
Answer that! [see note].
374–75 for I shall serve her who is the best of all good things loyally and never
refrain [from it]—stop this behavior!

But in the ende, to say yow trouth agayne, 385
 For any greef that may be to me sent,
 I sewre yow, bi god, hit woll not be,
 Forwhi y kan not make him to consent—
 Myn hert, the whiche that maystir is of me.

Though ther be weyes many, who þat sought— 390
 But what, no force, y ley them on þe playne,
 Thynkyng that Sokoure shall me sett aloft
 As in comfort or hope, oon of the twayne.
 Allas! if y had power to restrayne,
 Hit shulde be doon, ywis, as sone as ment— 395
 Or souner if ther myght be quantite;
 He shulde no more in Loue be resident,
 Myn hert, the which that maystir is of me.

f For bi swetnes y wot that now and oft f 8r
 Of prati Hope Loue fedith him certayne, 400
 That all his lyue to lyue so he ne rought;
 He lust not knowe that he me doth forpayne,
 Me drenchyng so in teeris fele that rayne,
 For of Plesaunce his wounde hit hath a tent
 That nought he sett bi myn aduersite 405
 But of my lijf thus holdith the iugement—
 Myn hert, the which that maystir is of me.

So many wordis loo as y haue spent
 Hit greuyth me, but what hit more, parde,

387 . . . it will not happen (that I leave Love)

390–91 Though there be many ways [to leave the service of Love] [for] him who sought [them]—well, no matter, I lay down [my arms] on the field of battle (i.e., refuse to try to find them)

396 Or sooner, if there could be [such an infinitesimal] quantity [of time]

399–402 For I know for certain that sometimes Love feeds him [my heart] with sweetness of pleasant Hope so that all his life he does not mind [Love's hard service]; he [my heart] does not want to know that he makes me suffer grievously
 405–6 so that he cares nothing for my misfortune but has the power thus to decide my fate

408–11 That I have expended so many words grieves me, but what hurts me more is that I have given (not given but wasted [i.e., given with no return]) my heart . . .

Me hurt that y haue geve (not geve but spent) 410
 Myn hert the which that maystir is of me.
Ch. 23, B VII

When y am leyd to slepe as for a stound B8
 To haue my rest, y kan in no manere,
 For all the nyght myn hert aredith round
 As in the Romaunce of Plesaunt Pancer, 415
 Me praiyng so as him to hark and here,
 And y ne dar his welle disobay
 In dowtyng so to do him displesere.
 This is my slepe yfalle into decay.

In this book which he redde is write & bound 420
 As alle dedis of my lady dere,
 Which doth myn hert in laughtir oft abound
 When he hit rett or tellith the matere,
 Which gretly is to prayse, without[en] were,
 For y my silf delite it here, mafay, 425
 Which, if thei herde, so wolde eche straungere;
 This is my slepe yfalle into decay. f 8v

As with myn eyen a respit to be found
 As for an howre (y axe not for a yere),
 For which dispite welnygh he doth confounde 430
 That they ne kan fulfille my desere,
 For which to rage and sighe as in a gere
 He farith, so that even as well y may,
 As make him stynt, likke out a cole of fyre.
 This is my slepe yfalle into decay. 435

Thus may y, loo, more souner wyn my bere
 Then make my froward hert to me obay,

420 In this book that he reads is written and bound
 428–31 [I ask my heart for] an hour's respite for my eyes. . . , for anger at which
 (that they cannot [read, and thus] fulfill my desire [because they are sleepy]), he
 is nearly destroyed
 436 Thus I may sooner attain my bier

For with myn hurt he doth him silf achere;
This is my slepe yfalle as in decay.

Ch. 24, B VIII

Iresshe Bewte, riche of yowthe & lustynes, B9
The smylyng lookis casten so louely, 440
The plesaunt speche governyd bi wittynes,
Body well shape, of port so womanly,
The high estat demenyd so swetely,
The well ensewidnes of word and chere, 445
Without disdeyne shewyng to lowe & hye
(For whiche all folk hir prayse, and so do y),
Alle thewis goode this hath my lady dere.

So well bicometh the nobill, good princes 450
To syng or daunce in all disport, trewly,
That of such thing she may be callid maystres.
What that she doth is doon so prately
That noon it may amenden, hardily.
She is the skole of all goodly manere:
Who hir biholt may lere that is witty 455
Or in sight hath hir deedis to aspy;
Alle thewis goode this hath my lady dere.

Bounte, Honour, Astat, and Gentiles—
They rewle hir hert, so are they well worthi,
For trouthe she wantith noon, nor stedfastnes. 460
Nature in hir hath shewid gret maystry
Hir forto make and forme so propirly
In euery poynt to stonde as Dame Sans Pere
Of alle that lyue, god wot, vndir the sky.
I say not this, but alle hir seth with eye; 465
Alle thewis goode this hath my lady dere.

441 . . . scattered so graciously

448 Apparently this is the main clause introduced by the rest of the stanza.

449–50 It becomes the noble, good princess so well to sing . . .

455–56 who looks at her or observes her deeds, and has the wit, may learn from her

465 Not only I say this, but all who lay eyes on her

She is more lijk, then woman, a goddes;
 I trowe that God hath sent hir, Almyghty,
 Into this world to shewe his gret larges:
 What vertu he kan sett in oon body! 470
 She is the sovl fenyx of Araby
 Which may not be thorough praysid in a yere;
 Hit to presume as were a gret foly,
 For noon hath wett thereto suffisyngly;
 Alle thewis goode this hath my lady dere. 475

If ther be wight ytane with heuynes,
 Biholde hir swete demene, and remedy
 I warant he shall haue of his distres
 As for the tyme, a reles sodeynly f 9v 480
 Of euery peyne, forgote in his party.
 A paradise hir company is it here,
 A hool complet without greef or any,
 The more biholde, the more delite, forwhi
 Alle thewys goode this hath my lady dere.

Ye ladies and alle fayre, bothe lowe and hie, 485
 That herith this—me preysyng my lady—
 I yow biseche to take no displesere.
 I say hit not to yowre disprayse forthy,
 But me to shewe hir servaunt to y dy.
 Alle thewis goode this hath my lady dere. 490

Ch. 25, B IX

B10

M Adame, a trouthe not wot y what to say
 Nor bi what ende that y shulde first bigynne
 The wofull lijf vnto yow to biwray
 Which shertith me more nerre than doth my skyn.
 Hit forto speke, as well lo may y blyn— 495

477 let him behold her sweet demeanor . . .

483 the more he beholds, the more delight, because

489 but to show myself to be her servant till I die.

495–96 I might as well be silent as describe it [my woeful life], because words will not bring me nearer [to you]

Forwhi bi speche not kan y be the nerre;
 What helpe, god wott, as shulde y bi hit wyn,
 Syn hit is so that y am from yow fare?

What y now se hit noyeth me, mafay,
 But y for drede my countenaunce forpeyne 500
 As with my mouth to shewe a laughtir gay
 When that myn hert as wepith me withinne.
 A martir me to calle hit were no synne
 If Cupide make a seynt as of louer f 10r
 For paynys thikke endewre y, lo, not thynne 505
 Syn hit is so that y am from yow fer.

But neuyrtheles y humbly thanke yow ay
 For yowre writyng; my woo hathe pesid syn
 With Swete Comfort y took the selvyn day,
 The whiche y more sett by then all my kyn 510
 That neuyr fro my brest as shall hit twyn,
 Which chaungith not, y pray yow as y dare,
 For now my blis on hit is to myssyn
 Syn hit is so that y am from yow fare.

My ledy hert is lightid vnto tyn 515
 Bi Comfort, loo, but absence doth me war
 That more y lust to wayle then laughe or gren
 Syn hit is so that y am from yow fare.

Ch. 27, B X

B 11

This fer from yow am y, lady mastres,
 Savyng myn hert which left is with yow ay. 520
 In company of Woo and Gret Distres

508–512 . . . my woo has been alleviated since [your writing] by Sweet Comfort [which] I took [to myself] the same day, whom I value more than all my kin “The whiche” (510) refers back to “Swete Comfort” (509); “hit” (511) refers to the letter; and “changith” (512) is an imperative. “Which” (512) refers in a general way to the lady’s positive disposition toward the lover.

513–14 for now the happiness it [the letter] gave me has ended, since I am far from you.

519 Thus I am far from you . . .

I lyue, and loke for comfort day bi day
 Of Plesere, which Absence holt vndir kay,
 That y ne may now stroke yowre sidis pleyne,
 For, if y myght, me fle wolde Greef and Peyne 525
 And y shulde fynde (so seith me Esperaunce)
 Bi purchase of my derkid eyen twayne,
 As moche of weele as y haue displesaunce.

If euyr wight as knew of heuynes, f 10v
 Then gesse y wele that y haue made assay 530
 As ferforth loo and of as gret larges,
 Forwhi of woo my peere not haue y say;
 Yet not ne recche y what y dewren may
 In displesyng fals Ielowsy, certeyne,
 For y a port of ioy me do restrayne 535
 —And yet they spie how y lyue in penaunce;
 As an vnhappy day mote they atayne
 As moche of weele as y haue displesaunce!

Take hit in gree, O goodly yong princesse,
 Syn that ye knowe wherfore y am away, 540
 Which, aftir this, shall turne vs bothe gladnes—
 Though that y wolde most fayne, without nay,
 Ben with yow, swete; but what, y hit delay
 And leue the ioye y faynest wolde attayne,
 But, yong and oold, to serue and neuyr fayne 545
 I shall yow loo and pray this in substaunce:
 That God yow graunt (which power hath & mayn)
 As moche of weele as y haue displesaunce.

I haue of woo so gret an abundaunce
 That teeris salt my hewe doth all forstayne, 550
 But sende me, lord, a lak and make me fayne—
 As moche of weele as y haue displesaunce.

Ch. 28, B XI

531–32 [to] as (high) a degree and of as great amount [as he has], for I have not seen the equal of my woe

535–36 for I impose on myself a joyous demeanor—and yet they [the jealous] spy
 545–46 but I shall serve (you) and never refrain [from doing so] young and old
 (i.e., my whole life) . . .

Syn that y absent am thus from yow fare
 (God wot, madame, how hit doth me ennoy!)
 I humbly biseche yow as y dar, 555
 If hit plese yow of yowre curtesy,
 When ye are sovl, withouten company,
 A mollyng, swete loue cosse to wisse in me,
 With a quyk hert and a thought lusty,
 Forto aslake my gret aduersite. 560

Bi nyght to slepe as haue y no power:
 Thought cometh on me, Lust werrith me (not y why),
 In which thought oft y thynke—and neuyr be ner—
 That y in armes haue yow, my lady,
 For which y clippe my pylow lo and cry 565
 “O mercy, Loue,” and “Make me so happy
 That y may see this thought or that y dy
 Forto aslake my gret aduersite!”

Hope makith me a promis in manar
 He will me helpe, and saith me, “Care not, fy!” 570
 But what, the long abood sore doth me war;
 Yet, where so be y witt do or foly,
 I holde my pese, so trust y him trewly
 (And Hope surmounte daungerous Crewelte
 That he not long shall holde of me mastry) 575
 Forto aslake my gret aduersite.

In trewe seruice thus more and more ioy y,
 The God of Loue bisechyng humbly
 Vpon my carfull case to haue pite
 And of my wille to gyue me sum party 580
 Forto aslake my gret aduersite. f 11v

Ch. 29, B XII

558 . . . to wish to me [i.e., to send in your thoughts]
 563 . . . — but [it] never [actually brings me] any nearer [to you]—
 567 that I may see this thought [i.e., what I am thinking of] before I die
 569–70 Hope makes me a kind of promise that he will help me . . .
 574–75 (if Hope get the better of disdainful Cruelty so that he shall not have control over me for long)

B13

All be hit so y selde haue of yow sight,
 Yet mowe ye thynke that y am yowris ywis,
 As bi the oth y haue vnto yow hight:
 In all y ought, so am y ay yowris, 585
 Forwhi plesaunce nor ioy, god wot, ther nys
 Nor othir good that folke me geven may
 (I promys yow, bi God which is but oon)
 That shall this will bireyve me to y dey
 Saue only this, the verry deth aloon. 590

Ye wote right well the oth y to yow plight
 All to ben yowre, in tyme toforne this,
 And with yow left, stide of <me>, lady bright,
 The plegge with me the which most louyd is,
 Which was myn hert y gafe all, bi his 595
 Counsell, to dwelle with yow for onys and ay,
 Which that y holde and euyr shall in oon,
 For ther nys wight kan lette me yt, mafay,
 Saue only this, the verry deth aloon.

Yet neuyrtheles bileue y verry right 600
 If y yow tolde how that y fare amys
 Ye wolde haue pite, or eche othir wight,
 On greef y dewre, myn owen sovll hertis blis,
 For as of woo, the way noon nede me wis,
 For wite ye well that y from day to day 605
 Laboure therynne, and haue do longe agoon, f 12r
 That y ne ought desire, well may y say,
 Saue only this, the verry deth aloon.

☉ fayre, which y so fayne wolde see and kis,
 Which y biseche God graunt me sone, or this, 610

589 that shall take this desire from me till I die

594–95 the pledge which is dearest to me, which was my heart that I gave wholly

597 “Which” refers to the oath of line 591.

601–3 that if I told you . . . you would have pity on the grief I endure before [you would pity] any other suitor . . .

606–7 labor in [woe], and have for a long time, so that I desire nothing . . .

610 which [favor] I pray God grant me soon, or this [one],

If so to graunt me be not to his pay:
 I humbly beseche him that anoon
 To gyue me so no more (O welaway!)
 Saue only this: the verry deth aloon.

Ch. 30, B XIII

B14

615

Now what tidying, my lady mastres?
 How farith oure loue, y pray yow hertily?
 For, in my side, y make yow sewre promys
 In oon purpos, that y me kepe trewly
 Without contrary thought in my party:
 Which is that y shall serue yow to my last
 As only yowre; wherfore (as wot ye how)
 As in yowre part now be not childisse gast,
 But in liche wise, let se, aquytith yow.

620

Al be that Daunger hath, and gret Distres,
 As of long tyme soiournyd all to nygh
 Mi nakid hert, thorough force of hir rewdenes,
 Of turnys straunge him shewyng full many.
 Allas they shulde so haue ther dwellyng (fy!)
 In Louys court, but Pite slepith fast!
 Yet y shall do my part in what y mowe
 As with my trouthe him forto ouyrcast,
 But in liche wise, lete se, aquytith yow.

625

630

f 12v

For though the ennoy of Payne and Heuynes
 Long tyme hath had ther course bi gret maystry,
 Yet in the lusty sesoun of gladnes
 Woll come my socoure (truste y verily)
 Vnto oure hertis bothe, for (wot ye whi?),
 Yet haue y Hope as y had tyme apast
 Saue only yow which y most truste now,
 For where my mynde is sayle ye ar the mast,
 But in liche wise, let se, aquytith yow.

635

640

613 to give me nothing else . . .

618 With one purpose, . . .

626 . . . through the force of their cruelty, playing many dirty tricks on him

634 have had their day for a long time . . .

Let me not goon as oon vnknowe, vnbast,
 For yowre y am, as y haue made a vow,
 That knowist thou lord, to knowe þat power hast
 But in liche wise, let se, aquytith yow.

645

Ch. 31, B XIV

MY wille, my loue, my verry sorse of blis,
 As thynkith this: what part y am, certeyne,
 That neuyr y forgete yow lo ywis;
 Wherefore y wolde pray yow not disdeyn
 Vnto the tyme y see yow eft ageyne,
 That ye lust to bithynke him for a stound
 The which that litill mercy yet hath found
 In yow, if so y durst it to yow sayne.

B15

650

All be hit yet that y say not but this:
 But that y ioy and wele do moche atayne
 In yow[re] swet company—forwhi ther nys
 Hit to deserue in me, this wote y playne,
 But neuyrtheles y wolde haue passyng fayne
 The reward which to trewe loue shuld habounde,
 Of which ther is all straungenes on the ground
 In yow, if so y durst it to yow sayne.

655

f 13r

660

I trewly serue yow as my power is;
 So oft y haue (or ellis y serue in vayne)
 Such gift as Loue doth vnto folkis his:
 Reward of grace forto aslake ther payne;
 Wherefore do as ye may content vs twayne:
 Acordith my desire! O cum of, round!

665

644 ? who acknowledge you [for my (feudal)] lord, knowing what power you have
 647–48 . . . that wherever I am . . . I never forget you
 651 but that you be pleased to think of him [i.e., me] for a while
 656–57 . . . there is nothing in me to deserve it, this I know for certain
 660 of which [instead of a reward] there is [in you] the greatest aloofness in the
 world
 663–64 so I ought to have . . . such a gift as Love gives unto his followers
 666–67 therefore do what will content us both: grant my desire! O hurry up,
 quickly!

To moche refuse ynorisshid is and wound
In yow, if so y durst it to yow sayne.

Hit is but coward Drede yow doth restrayne; 670
Were hit well doon, for trouth me to confound?
I nolde it happe shuld for a thousand pound
In yow, if so y durst it to yow sayne.
Ch. 32, B XV

MAdame, ye ought well know, to my semyng, 675
What ioy that y haue had or yit plesaunce
In yowre service for this, without gabbyng:
To gidere yet y neuyr had puysshaunce
Oon only plesere to my suffisaunce,
But even as sone as that y haue it raught
Daunger birevith hit me (such is my chaunce), 680
The small plesere that y haue to me kaught.

I knowe no ricches in this world beyng 685
Which may content to lessen my grevaunce
But it be what that haue ye well demyng,
Mi verry ioy and sovl remembraunce,
But Daunger hath banysshid myn affyaunce
And me from yow, that now y serue of naught,
Which hath be tane out of my gouernaunce
The small plesere that y haue to me kaught.

Not hit as small, forwhi hit suffisyng 690
Is vnto me in hauyng esporaunce,
Forto resceyue in aftir tyme comyng

675–78 what joy or pleasure I have had in your service before now (this is no lie): never yet had I power to gather even one single pleasure to content myself with
680 “hit” is in apposition to “plesere,” in the next line.

683–84 that can suffice unless it is that which you certainly have an inkling of [but I will not mention]

687–88 . . . so that now I am useless, by which [action] has been taken [i.e., he has taken] out of my guardianship

690–93 It [the pleasure] is not small, for it suffices me by giving me hope of receiving in the future a great abundance of happiness.

Vnto my weele so gret an habundaunce.
 I trust it shall not fayle, bi such penaunce
 That y woll take for Daunger threst abaft, 695
 Which woll enriche me lo well more þen Fraunce,
 The small plesere that y haue to me caft.

☉ fayre, sumwhat vnto myn allegeaunce
 As thynkith now (hit doth me aturbaunce)
 When ye se tyme; hit ned yow not ben taft 700
 (Withouten yow to lede is displesaunce)
 The small plesere that y haue to me caft.
Ch. 33, B XVI

B17

T His ioyous tyme, this fresshe cesoun of May
 When Florra shewith of flowris abundaunce
 That eche ennoy ought to ben layde away 705
 And forto take all gladsum lo plesaunce,
 I fynde my silf withouten recoueraunce,
 Most out of way oon ioy forto conquere. f 14r
 Eche thought and care so doth myn hert forfelle
 That y haue (well y may avaunte and swere!) 710
 The contrary of all my wrecchid wille.

☉ Loue, allas! not se y lo this day
 Oon wight but that he hath sum suffisaunce—
 Saue y—in loue, which am (O welaway!)
 The most woofull caytijf lo of Fraunce 715
 That faylid haue of all myn esperaunce,
 For when y gaf, in all y had power,
 Mi silf only yowre service to fulfille,

694–97 I trust that it [hope] will not fail me, through the pain I receive in defeating Daunger

698–702 O fair one, now consider [giving me] some relief (it [the misery that Daunger gives me] causes me distress) when you deem it time; you do not need to be taught ([you know that] to live without you is unhappiness) the little pleasure I have obtained

705–6 when every kind of suffering ought to be laid aside [in order] to take up all kinds of delightful pleasure . . . “And” is redundant.

708 most far from winning even a single joy

I had not went haue founde bi no manere
The contrary of all my wrecchid wille. 720

But what, syn hit is this to that y day,
I bere shall, as y kan, my greet penaunce
Forth in my trouthe (what may y betir say?),
For in my trouthe is all myn affyaunce
Maugre Daunger and all hir allyaunce; 725
For ther nys greef that shall me do forbere
Though that Disdayne thus evyr war me stille
She shall not cause me do this, nave y fere:
The contrary of all my wrecchid wille.

Without comfort havyn in anywhere, 730
Thus wayle y loo that myght as well be stille,
For me so nygh is brought—it may no nerre—
The contrary of all my wrecchid wille.

Ch. 34, B XVII

Displesere, Thought, Wrath, Woo, ne Hevynes, 735
Nor Turment noon that kan to me abounde,
Ne yet for dowte to dyen in distres—
Power haue ye noon—all haue ye me prisounde—
Mi feithfull wille to chaunge in any stounde,
That y haue tane to serue and evir shall,
Thorough which y thynke ther shall to me rebound 740
The grettist good that may to me bifalle.

for when so is ye greue me, yet, dowltes,
Hope saith, “Endure it forth and be iocound!”
Bihetyng me my lady and maystres
Shall witen of the woo me doth forwound 745
Not long to come, gyf so y pursew round,

719 I had not thought to have found . . .

737–39 you have no power . . . to change my faithful will, . . . that I have chosen to serve [the lady] . . .

744–46 Assuring me that my lady and mistress shall know very soon of the woe that wounds me terribly . . .

All nys that payne but that y haue him all,
 But y truste wyn, to make me hool and sound,
 The grettist good that may to me benfalle.

Ne sparith, hardily! do me yowre rewdenes! 750
 Shewe what ye kan! y haue yow all pardonyd,
 For sone y hope of Comfort and Gladnes,
 Syn shame hit were for trouthe me to confound.
 Thus with "No forse!" my care y cast to ground,
 Which y endewre for my fayre lady small, 755
 But welle benwaylyd <will they> when is found
 The grettist good that may to me benfall.

Thus am y he whos hurt in blak is gownnid;
 Yet thorgh myn trowth Good Hope y to me calle
 That in short tyme this shall be me gardownnid: f 15r
 The grettist good that may to me benfalle.
Ch. 36, B XVIII

Most goodly yong, O plesaunt debonayre, B19
 Yowre sendyng which me gaf comaundement
 A balad forto make, ye speke so fayre
 That with glad hert y shew here myn entent; 765
 Resceywith hit as hit is to yow ment.
 Ye mow well se, if ye lust to bihold,
 The greef that doth my swelty hert forrent,
 As bi the mowth y lever had yow told.

Yowre goodlyhed, hit doth me to repayre 770
 To be yowre man in what God hath me lent,

747–48 although there is no pain but that I suffer them all [i.e., all those pains named at the beginning of the poem], but I hope to gain . . .

750 Spoken to the personifications named in the first line.

752 for soon I hope for Comfort and Happiness, since it would be a shame to harm me in exchange for my loyalty

756 but they will complain bitterly when [I] have found

758 Thus I am he whose heart is garbed in black

763–64 . . . you address [me] so courteously [in] your missive which commanded me to compose a ballade

Desiryng most, of alle lyvith vndir ayre,
 Yow forto serue; but what, the gret turment
 That y endewre syn that y am absent!
 And eek to write me noyeth dowble fold, 775
 For gyf y myght bi othir wey or went,
 As bi the mowth y leuyr had yow told.

Suche is Daungere, my crewell aduersayre
 That of long tyme hath me in armes hent,
 In euery deede so fynde y him contrayre, 780
 That he ys glad to se m[e] thys Forschente.
 More to <reherse> hit were but laboure spent;
 What greef y lede and haue of dayes old
 Hit axith space, wherfore, if ye assent,
 As bi the mouth y levir had yow told. 785

Go, rewdisse bel, complayne my ponysshement, 15v
 But, welaway! y wolde if that y schulde
 —For forgetyng to knowe my iugement—
 As bi the mowthe y leuyr had yow told.

Ch. 37, B XIX

B20

WHen y last partid fro myn hertis swete, 790
 Whiche rewlith me in woo or hopis glad
 (Whom Ihesu saue and graunt hir sone to wete
 As ioy of all her faith[fulle] thoughtis sad),
 Whiche y lete bere the pouer hert y had
 Away, and neuyr sy syn of hit blynke, 795
 That nyght or day hit wondir doth me thynke
 How y haue leyd this many yere agoo

772 desiring most, of all (who) live,

779 Who for a long time . . .

782–85 To enumerate [my troubles, i.e., in this letter] further is a waste of time; the misery I suffer and have for a long time requires time, wherefore, if you were to assent, I would rather tell [them to] you in person

787–88 . . . I would have if I could have—because you might forget my fate—because I would rather have told you by mouth.

795–96 . . . and never caught so much as a glimpse of it since, so that it seems to me continually to be a miracle

Without an hert, sechyng my pittis brynke;
Hit nys but evene of Loue myracle lo!

Who ist may lyue or longe goon on his feet f 16r
Without an hert, as y my lijf haue lad?
Now, certis, noon (that dar y yow bihet!)
In such turment as y haue ben bistad!
But Loue wold haue his power knowen or rad,
Sum tyme in lengthe or sumtyme in a prynke, 805
To cause good will in louers hertis synke.
Him forto trust, what nede ye wordis moo?
They mowe perceyue whiche tastid haue his drynke;
Hit nys but even of Loue myracle lo.

Whan Pite sawe how freely that y lette 810
Myn hert bandoun, Mercy my lady rad
To rewe me, wreche, al were y no thing mette,
And leue hir hert with me (syn myn y nad)
So for myn owen, me charging all, and bad
Hit forto kepe, which (where y wake or wynke) 815
So shall y do, though tornys sesse or synke
That y thorough Daunger haue, my crewell foo;
But how y lyue and in such sorow swynke,
Hit nys but even of Loue myracle, lo!

What nede y more my papir spende or enke? 820
Who hath assayde wot where it be soo,
For gyf y iuge who leffe in such a shenke,
Hit nys but even of Loue myracle lo.

Ch. 38, B XX

798 seeking the brink of my grave

806 In order to cause good will to sink into lovers' hearts

810–14 When Pity saw how freely I let my heart give himself up, Mercy advised my lady to have pity on me . . . although I was not at all worthy, and to leave her heart with me . . . in exchange thus for my own, entrusting [it] entirely to me, and bade [me]

816–17 even though the tricks ?cease that I suffer at the hand of Daunger . . . [see note]

822 for if I consider who lives in such an awful state

B21

Honure and prays as mot to him habound
 That first did fynde the wayes of writyng, 825
 For comfort gret ordeynyd he that stounde
 To suche as haue of louys payne felyng, f 16v
 For when to speke they naue tyme nor metyng
 To say ther ladies of ther aduersite,
 Yet doth it them a gret tranquyllite 830
 Forto endite and sende as in writyng
 What grevous lijf they lede, as semeth me,
 Only for loue and feithfull trewe servyng.

Who so that write how he is wrappid & wounde
 In suche greef as kan kepe him from laughyng, 835
 And so may sende it to his lady round,
 Which is the leche to all his soore felyng,
 If then to rede hit be to her plesyng,
 She may right well therin perceyue and se
 What woofull gouernaunce endewrith he, 840
 Of whiche Pite may geue hir, hit mevyng,
 That his desert is reward of mercy,
 Only for loue and feithfull trewe servyng.

That hit is thus in myn hert haue y found
 And knowe the craft, for when he tath sekyng 845
 Nothyng kan him appese vpon the ground
 To he haue send or made sum endityng
 On the fayre which is his most likyng,
 Of which, if so that his fortune be
 To haue a response, of hir gret bounte, 850
 He tath therin so huge a reioysyng
 That forget is he had on his party
 Only for loue and feithfull trewe servyng.

841–42 on account of which [perception] Pity may prompt her, if the letter moves her, [to decide] that what he deserves is . . .

845 and [I] know the art [of writing love letters], for when my heart takes to sighing

852 that forgotten is [what] he had for his share [i.e., suffering]

But what, madame, Crist ewre me so that ye f 17r
 May vndirstonde as bi my mouth telyng 855
 What y haue dewrid in tymys quantite
 Only for loue and feithfull trewe servyng.
Ch. 39, B XXI

B22

All be that of my fare or sely case
 I gesse ye take full litill remembraunce,
 Yet if to wite hit lust yowre good grace 860
 My poore estat and nakid gouernaunce,
 As wite ye well that ferre from all plesaunce
 Am y and garnysshid with aduersite
 As moche—nay, more—than eny wrecche of Fraunce,
 God wot in what aforecursid parte. 865

Allas! and yet ne haue y doon trespace
 Wherthorough y ought to beren such penaunce,
 Forwhi my draught hath ben in euery place
 As to my trouthe in my derk esperaunce 870
 To purchase me good will, but variaunce
 Of Hope y fynde at my necessite,
 Which levith me clene withouten rekeueraunce,
 God wot in what aforecursid parte.

Daunger hath pleyd a draught tofore my face,
 But and y may rekeuyr <my> puysshauce, 875
 In spite of him, y trvst forto abraçe
 As in his stide anothir allyaunce,
 Forto ayelde his wrongfull doon grevaunce
 Of Thought and Woo that this wolde slene me,
 Albe y brought as now at the vttraunce, f 17v
 God wot in what aforecursid parte.

868–71 for I have moved all over the board, in my gloomy hope, in order to gain for myself [your] good will in exchange for my loyalty, but in my hour of need I find Hope inconstant

875–76 but if I may recover . . . I hope to embrace . . .

879–80 [at the hands] of Misery and Woe who thus want to slay me, though I now be vanquished completely

☉ now or nevir make sum ordenaunce
 And me avenge, my verry sovl fyaunce
 (I mene but yow, my maystres and lady)
 [Which ha]n with Daunger falyn at distance 885
 God wot in what aforecursid party!
Ch. 40, B XXII

B23

☉ Royall Hope, to long y se the slepe!
 Awake! and in sum ioyous thought arise,
 And sum plesaunt remembraunce to kepe
 Send to myn hert (fro whom? shall y devise? 890
 The fayrist borne, as Loos now gevith prise!);
 Hem to reiouse thou did but well indede,
 For Woo of weele hath raught him þe fraunchise,
 Wherfore (alak!) now faylith him not at nede.

☉f plesser Daunger hathe hym pot to wepe 895
 Syn that he now is fer in such a wise
 That he may not his worldly ricches grepe,
 Which lady is of his hy entirprise.

O, what hert hath suche destene as lyse
 In him? O Hope, come socoure him! O spede 900
 Thee now! he hath thee callid more then twyse,
 Wherfore (alak!) now faylith him not at nede!

ffor pouerte, abeggyng muste he crepe
 Where louers dwelle, but what for, krost off peyes?
 Nay, for gladnes, which fawte of doth him drepe. f 18r
 So parte almes to poore that for hit cries!
 O helpe, lete not oure selynes arise!
 Thenke on the poore, and with yowre almes fede!
 Without yowre grace, he ellis for sorow dyes,
 Wherfore, alak, now faylith him not at nede! 910

892 you would do well indeed to please him

895-98 Daunger has put him from pleasure to weeping, since he [my heart] is so far away [from my lady] that he can not obtain his earthly riches, [i.e.,] the lady [which is the object] of his noble endeavor [see note]

906-7 So give alms to the poor [one] who cries for them! O, help, let not our [heart and lover] misery increase!

☉ ye which bere the prays of all partise,
 In whom all vertu hath a gret entryse,
 Myn hert which hath, saue yow, noon opir crede,
 Helpe him from helle; brynge him to paradise,
 And now, allak, ne faylith him not at nede!

915

Ch. 41, B XXIII

IN louers paradise as them among,
 Not long to come, myn hert shall haue a place,
 And ellis, a trouthe, me thynkith he had wrong,
 Consideryng this: the grevous gret a has
 —Not on or twayne, they passe a thousand bras!—
 In servyng of his fayre and swete mastres,
 Which daungere hath in hold, alas! alas!
 Only to spel me this in heuynes.

B24

920

And so hath holde (O welaway!) to longe
 Mi poore hert this cursid, trayter face.
 But what, Good Hope as bit me comfort fonge,
 And saith he woll outplegge him in short space;
 But, woo is me, he spete so slow a pace!
 O Ihesu graunt he holde me his promes,
 For Sorowe doth eche membir me arase
 Only to spel me this in heuynes.

925

930

f 18v

☉ Loue, gret almes myght thou vndirfonge
 As to ben pitous on this sely case,
 For to alle suche it wolde example honge
 That listith wel as in thi seruice trace
 When they parceyue how hit lust the of grace
 So poore a sufferant <ayde> of thyn humbles
 Which ondesert that Deth doth this manace
 Only to spel me this in hevynes.

935

919 Considering this: the great griefs he has

923 Only to slay me thus with misery.

924–25 And so this cursed, traitorous one has held . . . my poor heart too long

933–35 for taking pity on this (my) miserable case, for it would present an example to all those who wish to serve you

938 Whom, undeserved, Death thus threatens

☉ make me, Loue, so happe to purchase 940
 Thou-wotist-what, to sett me in gladnes
 Or, Antropos, thou brest my lyvis lase
 Only to spel me this in heuynes.

Ch. 42, B XXIV

☉ Stedfast Trouthe, displaye thi baner! B25
 Support my right, y pray the hertily, 945
 And fresshe assayle this newe and strong Fronter
 Of Thought and Woo that this on why
 (O welaway!) hath holde felonsly
 The litill Ioy y had, for prisonere,
 So that to me they make him a straungere— 950
 I biseche God acursid mote they dey!

When that y ought bere forth a gladsom chere
 In placis straunge or ellis in company
 Not kan y shewe but who seith a manere,
 For though my mouth outshewe a laughtir dry 955
 Or speke a sportfull word, yet verily
 Distres and Daunger, with Payne in fere,
 Abak they thristen my poore Plesere.
 I biseche God, acursid mote they dy!
 f 19r

In cherte, allas, who had ther her, 960
 Or made of Ioy, me thynke, so moche as y?
 Wherefore of right (as Resoun doth me lere)
 Yet at the lest y ought haue sum party,
 But in baneshe as now thus doth he ly
 Ferre fro myn hert as bi the false conspere 965
 Of gery Fortune and Woo, hir counselere.
 I biseche God acursid mote they dy!

But and y had as of hem the maystry
 (As wolde God the terme that hit were ny!),

947-48 . . . who thus wrongfully . . . have held wickedly

954 I can display only a counterfeit [of good cheer]

960-61 Allas, who here held dear or made of Joy . . . as much as I?

I shulde not mysse to brynge hem to ther bere, 970
 For which alwey that this is my prayere:
 I biseche God, acursid mote they dy!
Ch. 42, B XXV

B Rennyng Desire to see my fayre maystres B26
 Hath newe assaylid the nakid, pore loggyng
 Of my faynt hert, which drepith in distres, 975
 That in eche where within his fyre brennyng
 Hath he so sett that in a gret feryng
 Stande y, god wot, lest hit woll not ben queynt
 Without thi grace. "O God of Loue," y cry,
 "Helpe now myn hert, þat many helpe hast sent!" 980
 —Thus calle y for yowre socoure pitously.

I haue asayd with Teeris of Larges f 19v
 This forto quenche, but all to my felyng,
 The werse is hit! This fyre, hit will not cesse
 Without elliswhere y haue sum releuyng. 985
 I brenne, y brenne! O frendis, come rennyng
 And helpe! Alas, this fyre were fro me rent!
 For if thorough fawt in slouthe of yow y dey,
 Ye are in synne and blame, to myn entent!
 Thus calle y for yowre socoure pitously. 990

But what if so y spille thorough yowre lacches?
 I yow biseche but this vnsele thyng:
 That eche of yow do synge for me a messe,
 And sone in Paradice haue y trustyng
 Among louers to se myn hert sittyng 995
 As a gret seynt and martir, for turment
 Hath he <evene> for his trouthe and al onewhi,
 For which as now in this grevous talent
 Thus calle y for yowre socoure pitously.

976–77 So that everywhere inside [my heart] he has so set his fire burning that I stand in great fear

996–97 . . . for he suffers torment for his loyalty and that entirely unjustly

What nede y spende more enke or parchement, 1000
 That fele the crampe of deth myn hert so nyghe
 As thorgh this rageous fyre which hath me hent?
 Thus calle y for yowre socoure pitously.

Ch. 44, B XXVI

B27

Myn hert hath sent abowt, ye, fer and nere,
 For his welwilleris, frendis, and allies, 1005
 As wherefor? whi, ther advise to here,
 To haue counsell of grete thingis which þat lyes
 On him, as this: how he may his enemyes, f 20r
 As Thought and Woo with ther cursid allyaunce,
 Best discomfit (that moyan wold he lere), 1010
 Which willith to distroy his ioyful chere
 As in the Prison of Grevous Displeaunce.

for in desert they putt haue his Plesere,
 And Ioye he holt of them but in patise
 Saue Comfort cometh to se him in a gere 1015
 And makith him a maner of promysse
 Them to banysshe. Lo in this maner wise
 Hope hath him oft achasid Disperaunce
 Which kepith Ioy fro me as a straungere,
 That causith this: my hertis rage martere 1020
 As in the Prisoun of Grevous Displeaunce.

☉ Myghti God, y humbly thee requere
 That y may se the tyme sone to arise
 That euery man may to his desere
 Without safcondit seche ther entirprise, 1025
 And then may Loue, if so he werken wise,
 Of Daungere take but right a small doutaunce;
 Then wold myn hert and y bothe laughe in fere
 Which now in sighis doth him silf atere
 As in the Prison of Grevous Displeaunce. 1030

1014 . . . according to the terms of a bargain [see note]

1018 Hope has repeatedly chased away Despair [from] him [the heart]

1029 Who [my heart] now wears himself out with sighs

Syn Absence thus me holt & from yow tiise
 Mi hert complayneth that ye myght agrise
 Hem forto here, myn owen sovl suffisaunce,
 Me praiyng this to write yow, lady dere:
 That he hath not all that he wolde desere
 As in the Prisoun of Grevous Displesaunce.
Ch. 45, B XXVII

f 20v

B28

HO<ffa howe,> myn hert! the schepe off Freche Teydyng
 Hope hath afresht with lusty Recomfort
 To cary to the fayrist borne lyvyng,
 Which is myn hertis lady and cheef resort, 1040
 And if he may attayne the ioyfull port
 (In self passage, y mene, to his desere),
 The See of Fortune playn to his plesere,
 A ioly wynd als blowyng into Fraunce
 Where now abidyng is my sovl maystres 1045
 Which is the swete of all my remembraunce
 And hool tresoure of my worldly gladnes.

Now certis y moche am to hir biholding
 Forwhi y knowe bi verry trewe report
 That ayenst Daunger, which of yvill willyng 1050
 Full longe on why hath doon me discomfort,
 That she hath tane thee, hert, as in support
 To helpe in all she kan—this out of were
 Y stonde—for which y haue with ioyfull chere
 Sende hir this shippe fulfillid of plesaunce, 1055
 For only cawse to stufte with the fortres
 Wherin thow <dost> kepe <thy> affyaunce
 And hool tresoure of my worldly gladnes.

1039 to carry to the fairest born of those who are are now living
 1042–43 (in safe passage, . . . according to his desire), the Sea of Fortune being
 smooth . . . “And” in line 1041 is redundant.
 1051 . . . has caused me to be defeated wrongfully
 1052 “That” repeats “that” of 1050.
 1055–56 sent her this ship filled with pleasure, in order to supply the stronghold

Wherfore to Deth make carfull departyng,
 Bothe thow and y we wol off on acort, 1060
 To holde with Trouthe oure poore lijf lestyng f 21r
 Ageyn Disseyt and all his false assort,
 And often this, vnto oure gret comfort,
 Remembryng, how be we ferre or nere,
 Forto athanke, aftir <oure> rewde manere, 1065
 Loue which hath sett vs in such aqueyntaunce
 Of oon so kynde and feithfull trewe pryncesse,
 Which hath bothe me and <thow> in gouernaunce
 And hool tresoure of my worldly gladnes.

Now Ihesu saue this shippe, not for oon yere 1070
 But many one, ageyne the false conspere
 Of suche as haue with Daunger allyaunce,
 Whiche wolde of thefte and ther gret rewdenes
 Birobbe me loo of all my goodly chaunce
 And hool tresoure of my worldly gladnes. 1075
Ch. 47, B XXVIII

B29

Not drede y Daungere nor yet noon of his,
 Forwhi y haue agarnesshe þe fortres
 Where myn hert hath resceyvid the goodis
 Of Recomfort and passyng gret Gladnes,
 Of which that Trouthe hath tane þe gouernes 1080
 This place to kepe full sewrely out of drede.
 Daunger defye y, and his gret rewdenes,
 For God of Loue woll helpe me in my nede.

for Resoun noon but in my side ther nys
 And as for Hope hath made me a promys 1085
 To be my frend (as he hath ben or this)
 That often has, bi force of his prowes, f 21v
 Made fro me flee bothe Sorowe and Distres

1059–60 Wherefore till Death part us, sorrowful, both you and I wish of one accord

1073 who would like, stealthily and cruelly, (to)

1084 there is no reason except on my side [i.e., none on Daunger's side]

Which oft so hath done Daungere sorow lede;
 But not ne recche y of his heuynes, 1090
 For God of Loue woll helpe me in my nede.

Wherfore y the requere, in all that is
 In me, myn hert, to take the <hardinesse>
 And renne on Daungere, whiche þat fele grevis
 Hath to vs doon; forthenke thou neuyrles 1095
 But also sone as thou wolt take redres
 A wol hem yelde—this is as trewe as crede—
 And y shall do my part without lacches,
 For God of Loue woll helpe me in my nede.

If so ye lust vs ayde, goodly princesse, 1100
 Sone trust y see the tyme (so god me spede)
 To haue of blys a passyng fayre largesse,
 For God of Loue woll helpe me in my nede.
Ch. 48, B XXIX

G Fayre, y wot ye haue in remembraunce
 (Withouten fayle, this trust y in certayne) 1105
 Of the most plesaunt allyaunce
 That God of Loue hath made bitwene vs twayne.
 His secretary, callid Promys Playne,
 The self tyme wrote the lettir of trete
 And aftir took it Trouthe (as knowith ye), 1110
 Which shall accord yowre deedis boþe in fere
 If so that tyme or nede hit lust requere.

Gladsum Desire was present, and Plesaunce, f 22r
 Which that tyme koude full yvill þer speche refrayne
 But gan to make full bisy ordenaunce, 1115
 I mene vnto the God of Loue souerayne
 As by his lawe to bynde, for wele or payne,

1095 . . . do not change your purpose in the least

1110–11 And afterwards Trouthe took it, . . . who will record your [copies of the legal] documents all together

1114 Who could be still only with great difficulty then

Oure weelis twayne to stonde in more surete
 As for oon weele; wherfore as semeth me
 I ought hit well bithynke (it sett me nere!) 1120
 If so that tyme or nede hit lust requere.

Myn hert hath, saue him silf, noon affyaunce
 Which he dare trust to kepe bis dede from rayne,
 And certis y enoy [t]his happy chaunce:
 To thynke his trouthe, for which y this agayne 1125
 Him counsell so to kepe him and refrayne
 From all maner frawde and <flater>,
 For who that frawde, is hit he or she,
 The God of Loue woll make him bye hit dere
 If so that tyme or nede hit lust requere. 1130

What y haue seid, madame, take hit in gree.
 For whi myn hert, as for a more sewrete,
 Shall say hit yow more playne to yowre plesere
 If so that tyme or nede hit lust requere.

Ch. 49, B XXX

Come to me, sum Gladsum Tidyng newe, 1131
 My faynty hert to comfort in distres 1135
 Say me how farith the Goodly Fayre and Trewe?
 Herdist thou hir speke of me oft—moch or lesse?—
 Me callyng “loue” of hir gret gentilesse? f 22v
 Hath she forgete? O nay, bi God aboue! 1140
 I trust as that she made me of promys
 When she me gafe this name, as loo, “My loue.”

Though absence holde me fro my service dewe
 And dowte of Daunger doth me heuynes,
 So moche goodnes knowe y hir doth pursewe 1145

1118–19 (to bind) our two wills to act more securely as one will . . .

1124–25 I enjoy this pleasant (good) fortune: to think on his loyalty . . .

1128 for whichever of two people deceives the other

1141 I trust that which she promised me [I trust that of which she made me (a) promise]

That y kan neuyr this bithynke, dowltes,
 But she will holde (the verry trewe prynces!)
 The promys which was made to my bihoue,
 Knyttyng so oure hondis to witnes
 When she me gafe this name: (as lo) "My loue." 1150

Me thynkith gret pite were hit, bi Ihesu,
 If that a lady of so gret nobles
 Shulde do hir silf refuse the coloure blew,
 Which hewe in loue is callid "stedfastnes."
 She may perceyue, bi good avisynes, 1155
 Whi y so rudely out my wordis shoue,
 And als what Loue vs causid swere, y gesse,
 When sche me gaf this name, as lo, "My loue."

Go belle, for trouthe, ensewre þou my maystres
 That y am hiris in all maner prove 1160
 As she comaundid me, to my gladnes,
 When she me gafe this name: (as lo) "My loue."
Ch. 50, B XXXI

Most goodly fayre, as lust hit yow to here 1165
 As in what wise y kepe, in gret cherte,
 Yowre hert which ye bileft me, lady dere,
 As of yowre grace and benygne gret bounte,
 This wot ye well: hit wrappid is, parde,
 Hool in a plesaunt kercher of Plesaunce
 And so is closid for a more sewrete
 As in the Cofir of my remembraunce. 1170

And hit to kepe in more clenly manere,
 Oft wasshe y hit, when ye thynke lite on me,
 As in the teeris of Pitevous Thought and Chere
 In wisshyng for the sight of yowre bewte,
 And so without dilay (as well ye see) 1175
 I drye hit by the fyre of Esperaunce
 And eft repot hit when hit folden be
 As in the Cofir of my remembraunce.

So quyth yow, if hit be yowre plesere,
 To my poore hert, which y haue geue yow fre. 1180
 In my most humbil wise y yow requere
 To kepe in trouthe—how? in an holow tre?
 Nay, vndir kay of Faithfull Volunte
 As y haue yowris doon, to my puysshauce,
 Thus kepe and shall in absent yow, lade, 1185
 Within the Cofir of my remembraunce.

This shewe y yow (how? thenke ye hit fole?)
 As of yowre hert, madame, the gouernaunce
 Which shett is, in ioy or aduersite,
 Within the Cofre of my remembraunce. f 23v
Ch. 51, B XXXII

B33

Lover:] **M**Yn hert, if so that y good tidying here,
 To telle hit thee, what woll pou geue me? Say!
 Heart:] They mowe be suche þat y wolde bye hem dere;
 They mowe ben suche y sett not by an ay.
 L:] As for reward, thou shalt but litill pay. 1195
 H:] Then say hem me, y pray the hertily,
 For hit to wite y haue gret appetite.
 L:] Hit is as that thi maystres and lady
 That faithfully she doth hir silf aquyte.
 H:] **W**hat kanst thou say then of my lady dere 1200
 That of Comfort myght sette me in þe wey?
 L:] I say thee this, so beth of right good chere:
 That she hath tane the see as yestirday.
 H:] But saist thou trouthe, or dost þou mokke & play?
 L:] I say the[e] soth, bi god, what nede y lye? 1205

1179–80 So do your duty . . . to my poor heart [i.e., treat my heart as well as I have treated yours] . . .

1184–85 as y have [kept], now keep, and shall keep yours, to the best of my ability, in your absence, my lady

1188 the way I keep your heart, madame

1194 they may be such [that] I don't care an egg (a whit) for [them]

1198 "That" repeats "that" of previous line.

1201 that might give me the opportunity [to obtain] Comfort?

And saith hit is but thee forto visite.

[H:] O Loue, as lo, y thanke the[e] humbly
That feithfully she doth hir silf aquyte!

[L:] What myght she more for þee don, wold y lere,
Then put hir silf in such a payne and fray? 1210

[H:] For Trouthe hit is that strengthith my matere,
Which causith hir so doon, this is no nay.

[L:] Then thenke thou this, to loue hir wel alway?

[H:] So shall y lo vnto that howre y dy
Withouten chaunge, and that y the[e] bihyte. 1215

[L:] Wel ought the swete ben praysid hardily f 24r
That feithfully she doth hir silf aquyte.

[H:] Gramercy, frend, y thanke the[e] verily;
Now take my good and leue me not a myte!

[L:] I nolde but say, when y kisse swetely, 1220
That feithfully she doth hir silf aquyte.

Ch. 52, B XXXIII

B34

How, how, myn hert! opyn þe gate of Thought
And resceyue into thee a swete present
The which my bestbilouyd hath to thee brought!
Caste now aside thi full greef and turment 1225
And bere the ioyfull. Whi? to myn entent
Thou oughtist well to take a gret gladnes
That fyndist hir withouten chaungement
As euyrmore a faithfull kynde maystres.

Full well to blesse, me thenke, þe tyme þu oft 1230
And Fortune which hath the such vre ysent,
That in hir grace thou thus art sett aloft
Without fayntise in sechyng way or went;

1211–12 It is Loyalty that strengthens my undertaking, which causes her to do this, without a doubt (“For” is redundant.)

1220 I do not want anything [i.e., your goods] but to say, . . .

1230–33 You ought very much to thank . . . the time and Fortune, who have sent you such luck, that you are elevated in her grace without delay in seeking way or path [to your goal, i.e., the lady]

Thou mayst perceyue, all were thyn eyen blent,
 For whi to thee she holdith hir promys 1235
 (Of which the preef ay shewith <out> dissent)
 As euymore a feithfull kynde maystres.

Hir to honoure, so loke thou fayle hir nought,
 Withouten chaunge to kepe thi fresshe talent
 As longe as that thi lijf is to the wrought, 1240
 Out ellis where choys or yet departement; f 24v
 For sest thou not what is, thorough hir, þe lent—
 Of euery weele so ynly gret gladnes?
 This forto see, inyoy thi seson spent
 As euymore a feithfull kynde maystres. 1245

A thousand thankis in myn hert is prent
 To thanke yow with, my verry sovl princesse,
 Forwhi y fynde that ye are to me bent
 As euymore a feithfull kynde maystres.
Ch. 53, B XXXIV

Within the tresoure haue y of my thought 1250
 A myrroure which y bought but late, parde,
 Of God of Loue (as when forgete y nought—
 This yere apast!) which solde it of bounte
 To me, wherin ay se y the bewte
 Of hir that ought ben callid wel trewly 1255
 The most fayrist bitwene this and Europe.
 Gret good, god wott, hit doth me in to pryē
 In abidyng my gladsom in good hope.

1234–38 You could perceive, even if your eyes were blinded, that she keeps her promise to you (for which the evidence is undoubtedly clear) [to be your] faithful, kind beloved forever.

1241 without choice of another or separation [from her]

1244–45 In order to see this [what joys she offers], enjoy your season [of love] spent [with] . . . a mistress always faithful and favorably inclined toward you.

1246 A thousand thanks are fixed in my heart

1250 Within the treasury of my thought, I have

1252 from the God of Love . . .

1257 . . . to gaze in [my mirror]

Ther nys likyng sett me so hye aloft
 Nor which y ought to take in such cherte 1260
 For in the paynfull destene was me wrought
 Fuloften tyme hit recomfortid me,
 That in myn hert nys ioy in no degre
 More then biholde how she is ingoodly,
 With gladsom eyen levtng no poynt aslope. 1265
 This is the bayte y bayte on, wot ye whi,
 In abidyng my gladsom in good hope. f 25r

Me thenkith eche day syn y my myrroure bought
 As in hit to biholde, where so y be,
 That euery woo therwith is fro me brought, 1270
 Wherefore in my good weele this am y he
 Bi Trouthis counsell and my fantase
 Shall rolle it vp to kepe it more clenly
 (To eftsome that me lust as for hit grope)
 In tresoure of my thought to kepe it drye 1275
 In abidyng my gladsom in good hope.

More riche of weele was neuyr noon then y,
 (All though my good resemble vnto Iope);
 My myrroure hit shall riche me to y dy
 In abidyng my gladsom in good hope. 1280
Ch. 54, B XXXV

ALak! y kan yow nethir loue nor <may>,
 Madame, so moche as þat y wold trewly,
 Forwhi ye wrot to me to putt away
 The greef and payne that doth me sore ennoy.
 Mi weele, my ioy, myn hertis sovl lady, 1285

1259 There is no image that makes me feel so exalted
 1263–65 so that there is not joy in my heart any greater than to contemplate her
 beauty, with smiling eyes (not at all slanting)
 1268–71 Every day since I bought my mirror, it pleases me to look in it, wherever
 I am, so that every woe is thereby taken from me, for which reason . . . I am thus
 he [who]
 1278 (although my reward resembles Job's)

Tesse ye, ye, ye, swet hert, bi God almyght,
I mene! So pray y yow, ben glad and light.
In trust that y shall se yow hastily.

Ye perse myn hert with wordis whiche ye say
That y ne kan—thei thrillen so swetely— 1290
Telle yow the comfort that they doth me ay
(Which yowre message hath shewid me priuily), f 25v
For this ye say: ye woll seke weyes ny
To come to me, that this y yow bihight:
I well no more my fayntid gost to myght 1295
In trust that y shall se yow hastily.

<**Als**> where ye say ye wisshe eche othir day
To ben with me, “O welaway!” y cry.
O fayrist swete withouten pere, nay, nay!
For, if to speke y durste ben so hardy, 1300
That more desire, and oft don, am hit y
With woundy hert to wisshe aftir yowre sight
Which is the thyng y most wille day or nyght,
In trust that y shall se yow hastily.

That ye are woo, alas, hit doth me dy 1305
But even as sone as y may, ladi bright,
I shall yow see, haue here my trouthe yplight,
In trust that y shall se yow hastily.
Ch. 55, B XXXVI

BVt late agoo went y my hert to se
As of his fare to haue sum knowlechyng; 1310
I fond him sett with Hope in compagne,

1286–87 it is you . . . I mean!

1290–91 so that I can not . . . tell you . . .

1292 (which your messenger . . .

1293–94 . . . you will seek immediate means to come to me . . .

1295 I do not desire to strengthen my wearied spirit any further

1301–2 I am the one, with wounded heart, who desires (and so I ought) the sight
of you more [than you do the sight of me]

That to him seide these wordis comforyng,
 "O hert, be glad, for y good tidying bryngel!
 So now, let se, pluk vp thi lustyhed,
 Forwhi y make the[e] feithfull trewe promys 1315
 That y thee kepe right sewrely out of drede
 The hool tresoure of louys gret ricches,

For this as trouthe, to wite, as do y thee, f 26r
 That the most fayrist borne, or is lyvyng,
 She loueth thee of feithfull fantase, 1320
 And with good wille woll doon to thi likyng,
 In all to doon that is to hir sittyng,
 And these wordis sent thee of goodlihed:
 That spite of Daungere or his gret rewdenes
 She wol departe thee large, maugre ther hed, 1325
 The hool tresoure of louys gret ricches."

For which my hert (to say the trouthe, parde)
 For ioy hath fett a thousand sithe sikyng,
 And, thow to weren blak were vsid he,
 Yet was it then yputt in forgetyng 1330
 And all his woo, his payne and turmentyng,
 In trust to fynde it now, or he be ded,
 Bothe plesere, comfort, and gladnes
 And only in his gouernaunce to lede
 The hool tresoure of louys gret ricches. 1335

My sabill hert with hope now blusshith reed
 And for comfort of yow, my fayre maystres,
 Which haue me promysid of yowre womanhed
 The hool tresoure of louys gret ricches.

Ch. 56, B XXXVII

1312 who [Hope] said to my heart these comforting words

1316 that I (will) keep for you . . .

1318 For I am letting you know this as the truth


1322 "to doon" repeats "doon" in the previous line.

1329 and, though he customarily dressed in black

1334 and to have in his care alone. "to lede" parallels "to fynde" (1332)

1336-37 My black [mourning] heart blushes with hope from the comfort you [have sent] . . . "And" is redundant.

B38

 Swete Thought, y neuyr in no wise
 Deserven may the good þou dost me lo
 For when Woo wolde my carfull hert agrise
 Thorough Fortune (now my frend and now my fo)
 Yet when so be as that it lust thee soo f 26v
 To doon me thynke vpon my fayre maystres 1345
 Anoon Displesere, Woo, and Heuynes
 They flee fro me. They dar not onys abide!
 But and they fynde me from thi company,
 In greef and payne welnygh they do me dy
 To that ye lust me newe comfort provide. 1350

The ioy y haue als kan y not devise
 Ageyn when y bithenke, wher so y go,
 The goodlynes that in my lady lise—
 Hir havour eek (for noo[n] nede teche hir, noo!).
 Thus prayse y hir, not sovl but many moo, 1355
 For who hir knowith to preyse hir hath gladnes.
 Wherefore, Swete Thought, to brynge me from distres
 Sum newe remembraunce do in me slide
 As sone as that ye se a tyme goodly,
 For whi not ellis me lengthith lijf trewly 1360
 To that ye lust <me> newe comfort prouyde.

Then woll Loue doon myn hope forto arise
 And so thorough yow lessen shall my woo
 For as bi yow Loue sent me his advise
 Forto ben glad and light as any roo 1365
 And saith at nede ye shall not goo me froo,
 Thus only loo y truste on his promys,
 Syn y bi yow rekouer the larges

1342 The “when” clauses of 1342 and 1344 (both being necessary components) are resolved by the “then” (unexpressed) clause of 1346–47, where “they” (1347) repeats the names of the three enemies mentioned in 1346.

1355 . . . not [I] alone, but many others [as well]

1358 cause some new thought to steal into my mind

1360 because nothing else lengthens my life . . .

1366–67 I.e., only when he tells me that you will always be with me do I trust his promise

Of good of Loue, for which y say in pride
 That neythir Daunger, Woo, nor Tyranny 1370
 Y drede right nought, but hir y them defy
 To that ye lust me newe comfort provide. f 27r

☉ goodly yong, O nobill, good princesse,
 Syn y ne may as se yow, neuyrtheles
 My writyng shall, so Ihesu ben his gide, 1375
 And grauntmercy and euyr gramercy,
 Forwhi gret almes don ye hardily
 When that ye lust me newe comfort prouyde.
Ch. 58, B XXXVIII

IF y koude make my wanton wisshis flee
 And the sighis that maken me so wan 1380
 Shulde y hem sende (but what hit wol not be!)
 Ovyr the fomy wawis oxyan
 To her hous, y seruaunt am and man,
 Which y most loue of any creature
 As only this, my worldly lo gladnes 1385
 Which that y holde in this poore lijf y dewre
 As for my souereyn lady and maystres.

Allas, how is hit? shall y hir neuyr see?
 O Swete Thought, so say me if thou kan!
 Hope hath bihight—ye! ye! ye! but he 1390
 To longe doth me endure the greef y han,
 And oft for sight when y come axe him whan
 In sluggissh slepe y fynde him (be ye sure).
 Thus euery day renewith my distres
 Without comfort (such is myn aventure) 1395
 As for my souereyne lady and maystres.

1371 do I fear at all, but here I defy them

1381–82 I would send them (except that it is not possible!) over the foamy ocean's waves

1384–85 whom I most love of any creature as my sole earthly happiness

1392 and often when I come to ask him when I shall see you

1396 because of my sovereign lady . . .

To lyue in pees y kan in no degre, f 27v
 Fortune on me so pleyeth the tyran,
 But for a tyme y soft shall beren me
 To that y haue to me more socoure tan 1400
 As thorough my trouthe, for syn y first bigan
 Bi trouthe y trust do <hir> discomfiture,
 For fresshe Plesaunce hath made me a fortresse
 That me to loue ne lett shall <hir> rigure
 As for my souereyn lady and maystres. 1405

⊙ goo, thou derke, fordullid, rude myture
 And say for trouthe—forwhi hit is no lese—
 That y haue chose withouten departure
 As for my souereyne lady and maystres.
Ch. 59, B XXXIX

B40

⊙ Fortune, dost thou my deth conspyre? 1410
 Onys let me pese, y pray thee hertily!
 For all to longe y fynde, withouten wyre,
 That thou hast had vpon me the maystry.
 Whi dost thou straunge when y thi mercy cry?
 Hast thou disdayne me, caytjif, forto here 1415
 That thus with payne hast brought vnto þe bere—
 That how y leve so longe y mervell, how
 With greef y haue endewrid many yere?
 Alas, alas! and is this not ynough?

Ʒonge in this lijf may y not dewren here 1420
 A, a, Fortune! mercy, y cry, mercy!
 Of my compleynt harke þe carfull matere
 And not arett my rewdisse speche mokrery, f 28r
 Forwhi to iape not lustith me trewly,
 Wherefore y the right humbly requere 1425
 To take fro me that thus me sett afyre:

1397 I am not able to live in peace at all

1404 so that her [Fortune's] cruelty shall not keep me from loving

1407 . . . —because it is no lie—

1415–17 Do you disdain to listen to me, miserable wretch, who have brought me thus with pain unto the [my] bier—so that I marvell . . . ?

The greef and smert, O welaway! syn thou
Vnto the deth as hast ybrought me nere.
Allas, allas! and is this not ynough?

I may wel bere eche payne or displetere 1430
Sawe only on, which on me causith dy:
That y so longe dwelle fro my lady dere
Whom y haue chose to loue (no wondir why!),
For tyme agoon as in hir company
Lefft y myn hert, my ioy, and my desere, 1435
That neuyr sith list come to do me chere.
Forwerry, there in no thing lo they mowe,
Thus lyue y sovl, without ioy or plesere.
Allas, allas, and is this not ynough?

To balade now y haue a fayre leysere; 1440
All othir sport is me biraught as now
Martir am y for loue and prisonere;
Allas, allas, and is this not ynow?
Ch. 60, B XL

B41

Wope hath me now fresshe, gladsum tidyng brou3t 1445
Which ought to doon me comfort & likyng.
He saith that Fortune hath hir newe bithought
And tath hir silf a bettir avisyng
Forto amende in euery maner thyng
That she hath doon me in displetere falle, f 28v
So that hir wheel shall take a newe turnyng— 1450
But Ihesu graunt that hit may sone bifalle.

Although hir greef haue welnygh deth me wrou3t,
I shall hit spare and put in forgetyng

1434–37 for some time ago I left my heart, my joy, and my desire with her, which have never since chosen to come back to cheer me up. Sick at heart [as I am], they can do nothing to help me

1447–49 and makes a better decision [i.e., changes her mind] to make amends in every way for causing me to fall into [a state of] misery

1452 Although her hostility has nearly caused my death

1453–56 “Spare,” “put,” and “graunt” (1456) are parallel; “hit” refers forward to “quarell” (1454), “wrath,” and “ywill willyng” (1455).

All my quarell in which y felt vnsoft,
 Mi wrath also, and all myn yvill willyng, 1455
 Of eche wrong doon to graunt hir pardonyng,
 For y may fynde to serue hir loo and shall
 If so hir lust to gyue me comforyng,
 But Ihesu graunt that hit may sone bifalle.

If that of grace she sette me so aloft 1460
 And that to me she shewid so gret a thing—
 That y myght wrappe within myn armes soft
 The fayrist born inliche to my menyng—
 No more axe y in lengthe of my lyvyng,
 For then had y as my desiris alle, 1465
 Even verry hool without more wisshyng—
 But Ihesu graunt that hit may sone bifalle.

☉ Loue, if that thou gaue a comaundyng
 Vnto <Fortune> to lyft me of my fall,
 Of ioy y trust to haue a rekeueryng— 1470
 But Ihesu graunt that hit may sone bifall.

Ch. 61, B XLI

B42

Not wot y now what wise to bere my chere,
 This day of May so full of gret gladnes,
 For in oon part y haue withouten were f 29r
 (Thankid be God) a feithfull trewe maystres 1475
 Of eche good thewe which hath more þen larges,
 And als y wott in grace of hir mercy
 She doth me holde, all be y not worthi.
 Oft y not then ben glad?—that wold y lere!—
 And me to keppe in ioy and gret plesaunce? 1480
 3eys certis loo and Loue to thanken hir
 Right humbly with all myn hool puysshaunce.

1457 for I may decide to serve her, and [in fact] I shall

1461 and if she were to show me . . .

1463 . . . in accordance with my desire—

1477–81 and also I know that she holds me in favor by [her] mercy . . . ought I not then to be glad? . . . and keep myself in joy and great pleasantness? Yes, and certainly (I ought) to thank Love now . . . [Both “to keppe” and “to thanken” are parallel to “ben glad.”]

But then ageyne, as caytif and martere
 I must endure so moche woo and distres
 Thorough sawt of Fortune which me doth atere 1485
 On eueri side, which is of care princesse.
 Thus moche tyme of my youthe and lustynes
 Doth she me spende in payne and mysere
 And doth me dwelle in this aduersite—
 Thys to fer forow my good lady dere 1490
 Where geder shulde y my riche esperauce!—
 Which y shall drede and loue bothe fer & nere
 Right humbly with all myn hool puysshaunce.

Wherfore, May, that y thee thus requere
 To pardone me of thi gret gentiles, 1495
 That y ne may as serue thee now to yere
 So as y ought, for here y make promys:
 Mi will is good to thee, but hevynes
 So long a tyme hath this infosterid me
 That eche ioy is forgote in my parte, 1500
 That y withdrawe from euery gladsom feere,
 For woofull folke they doon but comberaunce. f 29v
 In thought a reklesse thus leue y and prayere
 Right humbly with all myn hool puysshaunce.

Wherfore, Remembraunce, biseche y thee 1505
 This poore balade to take it my lade
 As fro myn hert in eche lowly manere
 Which hool is gyue vnto hir gouernaunce
 And shall to that y taken haue my bere
 Right humbly with all myn hool puysshaunce. 1510
Ch. 62, B XLII

1490 thus too far from my good lady dear

1496 that I can not serve you this year

1498 I mean well toward you . . .

1501 so that I withdraw . . .

1503 I live thus as a recluse in thought and prayer

1506–7 to take humbly this poor ballade from my heart to my lady

B43

MY poore hert bicomen is hermyte
 In hermytage of Thoughtfull Fantase.
 For false Fortune, so full of gret dispite,
 That many yere hath hatid him and me
 Hath newe allyed hir (this may y se), 1515
 To his gret hurt, with Payne and Heuynes
 And hath him banysshid out of all gladnes,
 That where to dwelle nath he o bidyng place
 Sae in the carfull wode in payne to ly,
 Where he contentith bide his lyvis space, 1520
 And yet y say him how it is foly.

Roche haue y spent of speche to his profite
 But that to harke y trowe he is not he;
 Mi wordis alle nar <worth> to him a myte;
 His will is sett in suche perplexite 1525
 That lightly loo hit kan not chaungid be.
 So is he gouernyd al as bi Distres,
 Which ganyst his profit doth neuyr cesse 1530r
 Him to avise (such counsell ist he hase!),
 That nyght and day him holdith company, 1530
 That he may not eschewe his wrecchid case,
 And yet y say him how it is foly.

This as for me, y cast to leue him quyt,
 Mi bestbilouyd, myn hertis sovl lade,
 Without so be ye lust to him write 1535
 Sum praty word of yowre benygne bounte
 Forto alesse his gret aduersite,
 Ellis hath he made a feithfull trewe promys
 Forto renounce the ioy and gret riches
 Of gladsom thought or plesere in him was— 1540

1518 so that he has no place to dwell

1520 where he contents himself to remain for the rest of his life

1523 but he is not one to pay heed . . . to what I say

1530–31 who [Distress] keeps him company night and day, so that he can not escape his miserable situation

1540 . . . that was in him—

And aftir that vnto that howre he dey
 The Abite of Discomfort on him lace,
 And yet y say him how it is foly.

☉ fayre sance per, lo this without yowre grace
 For any thyng that y kan do trewly 1545
 Mi dullid hert wol not comfort, allas,
 And yet y say him how it is foly.
Ch. 64, B XLIII

A, Daunger, here y cast to thee my gloue B44
 And thee appele, O traytoure, of tresoun
 Tofore the hy and myghti God of Loue 1550
 That shall of right do me, of thee, resoun,
 Forwhi thou hast full many a sesoun
 On why doon me endewre gret heuynes,
 That dost me dwelle thus from the good princesse f 30v
 Which hath no pere (such is hir happy chaunce). 1555
 But what! alway thou holdist thyn vsaunce
 To greven suche as Louys folkis be
 For which y, on of them most vnworthe,
 For them and me here take y this quarell:
 That, carell, to dye thou shalt hit not eschewe 1560
 As thourgh myn hond, bi god, so leue me well,
 Without so be thou yelde thee to ben trewe!

Whi sittist thou so hye in pride aboue
 That vsist this without occasioun,
 To turment suche as trewe ben vnto Loue, 1565
 That with hool hert and feithfull entencioun
 Serue Loue without othir condicioun?
 To moche to blame art thou—to blame, ye, certes!
 Wherefore bithynke thee thyn amendes dres,

1544–46 . . . thus without your grace my dulled heart will not be comforted . . . by anything that I can do . . .

1553 caused me to endure great woe wrongfully

1558–59 for which reason I, one of the most unworthy of them [Love's followers], undertake this trial by combat here on their behalf and on my own ["y" (1559) repeats "y" (1558).]

To leue thi wrath and hatfull gouernaunce 1570
 And with lowe hert and humbill repentaunce
 Go cry mercy to all folke, he or she,
 That thou hast cawsid wayle or ben heue,
 To suche, y mene, as haue thee founde rebell,
 Ellis trust thou this: that thou shalt not remew 1575
 But with my gloue, that y thee here appele,
 Without so be thou yelde thee to ben trewe!

Alway thou thynkist yvill! yvill mote þou proue!
 So full art thou of false suspescioun,
 Well shewist thou bi thi deedis, as thi move, 1580
 Thi foster fadir was sum carle feloun!
 What grevith thee, though that we haue in wone f 31r
 As forto loue to sett <oure> bisynes,
 To occupy <oure> tyme of lustynes
 In placis full of ioy and gret plesaunce 1585
 Which is vertu and gracious deseraunce?
 Wherefore, fals prowde cherle, let see!—
 Chaunge thi willis, full of crewelte,
 Or, traytoure, y shall geue thee such batell
 That hit shall do thee thi cursid deedis rew 1590
 Well more than shall thi deth—a thousand dele!
 Without so be thou yelde thee to ben trewe!

Now take my gloue or yelde thee, with myschaunce!
 Let se, coward, if that thou dar avauce!
 The toon of two thou chesen must to thee: 1595
 Knokke on thi brest, hit may noon othir be,
 For nought [. . .]
 Thow shalt not seche no mo wayes newe,
 But thou shalt dye! Now speke on thi perell,

1573 whom you have caused to wail or be woeful

1575–76 . . . that you will not leave [here] without [taking up] my glove with which I challenge you here

1578 may you suffer ill!

1580 [that] you show clearly by your deeds, as [by] your face, [that]

1582–83 . . . though we busy [lit.: are accustomed to busying] ourselves to love

1590–91 that it will cause you to regret your malicious deeds more than would your death . . .

Without so be thou yelde thee to ben trewe! 1600
Ch. 65, B XLIV

ANd, god, before the greef and gret ennoy B45
 Shall hastily passe of my aduersite
 (Whom say y this saue yow, swet hert, only?)
 And me woll falle a gladsum tyme lust[e]
 But wote ye loo as when that hit must be? 1605
 Hit shall be when the plesaunt lemys shyne
 Of yowre most fresshe and ynly gret bewte
 In at the wyndowes of my derkid eyene.

Then woll the chambir of my thought trewly f 31v
 Of plesaunce take a light in eche parte. 1610
 Such ioy woll him aray so fresshe and hy
 That waken must myn heuy hert slepe
 Out of his fowle and sluggissh slogarde.
 He shall no more then slepe, bi Seynt Quyntyne,
 When that this light hath take on him entre 1615
 In at the wyndowes of my derkid eyne.

Allas, when wol this tyme approchen ny
 The ilke sonne to se? (y myght be so happe!)
 But what, ther nys but ye, myn owen lady,
 Must yow bithynke how hit may come to me. 1620
 For wot ye well, dere hert, that y am he
 In whom ther nys oon ioy forto ben sene
 Vnto y may this likyng sonne see
 In at the wyndowes of my derkid eyne.

Then shall myn hert haue of felicite 1625
 As moche as any hert—what so thay ben—
 When this sonne doth shewe his gret clerte
 In at the wyndowes of my derkid eyne.
Ch. 67, B XLV

1601 Good [form of address], . . . “And” is redundant.
 1604 if a happy [and] cheerful time will befall me

B46

AT the short game of tablis forto play
 Loue hath me long had in his gouernaunce, 1630
 And evyr this he chargid me alway:
 Myn entirpoynt to kepe hit in substaunce,
 And hath me sayd, if so y haue puysshaunce
 To kepe [t]his poynt, that then, withouten were,
 That at the last y shulde even verry clere f 32r
 Wynne the game withouten more dowtaunce.

But take am y, and y not entre may
 The poynt y wolde—the more is my grevaunce—
 But Ihesu graunt me (loo, what may y say?)
 That y may onys attayne sum happe chaunce 1640
 To my purpos, forwhi ellis of penaunce
 Shall y haue more then evir had martere,
 Without so be y may to my desere
 Wynne the game withouten more dowtaunce.

fortune doth turne the dise so, welaway! 1645
 That weele and woo me <wayith> in balaunce,
 But what, Good Hope he saith me thus, mafay,
 (In whom y haue a full gret affyaunce)
 How that my trouthe shall gete me suffisaunce
 Of happy cast vnto myn owen plesere, 1650
 But as for that yet am y neuyr the nere
 To wynne the game withouten more dowtaunce.

☉ helpe me, Loue, that sest myn atturbaunce!
 I the requere with humbill obeyshaunce
 Sum praty moyan that thou wolt me lere 1655
 How that y myght avoyde this iupart here
 To wynne the game withouten more dowtaunce.
Ch. 68, B XLVI

B47

Welcome and yit more welcome, bi þis light,
 O Fresshe Tidyngis, vnto myn hert are ye!

Say me, hast thou had of my ladi sight? f 32v
 Come telle me sumwhat of hir, now let see,
 As bi thi trouthe how thynkist, is she not she
 (She was when last we partid compane),
 Which plesid hir say (to bryng me out of woo,
 Tredyng my foot and that so prately), 1665
 "Teyz yow to whom y loue am and no moo."

Hir good will ay to me in oon [is] plight,
 This fynde y well, for where hir gret bounte
 Hath chosen Trouthe to serue hir day and nyzt,
 As gentilwoman cheef to her bode, 1670
 Then provith well, as thenkith me, parde,
 That she of Trouthe woll susteyne þe party
 When she lust say—for which y thanke hir, lo—
 As to enioy me (wrecche most vnworthi),
 "Teyz yow to whom y loue am and no moo." 1675

I holde my silf the most happy wight
 In all this world when she "loue" callith me,
 For in eche where, who so hir knowith right,
 She praysid is for fayrist of bewte;
 So God me graunt as onys to ben he, 1680
 Maugre Daunger, to se hir hastily,
 That she eft sone may say vnto me soo,
 "Thenkith, my loue, for Trouth that this say y:
 Teyz yow to whom y loue am and no mo."

I writen haue within myn hert trewly 1685
 As for lesyng to kepe it where y go
 This refrayt, which y loue right hertily: f 33r
 "Teyz yow to whom y loue am and no mo."

Ch. 69, B XLVII

1662–66 . . . is she not the one . . . who was pleased to say . . . "It is you whose love I am and no one else's"

1670–71 as first lady in waiting, then it proves well . . .

1678–79 . . . [by those] who truly know her, she is praised everywhere as the most beautiful

1682 so that she at a later time may say . . .

1686 to keep from losing it wherever I go

B48

TO longe (for shame!) and all to longe trewly,
 Myn hert, y se thee slepe in displese.
 Awake this day, awake! O verry fy!
 Lete vs at wode go geder may in fere
 To holde of oure oold custome the manere.
 Ther shall we here the birdis synge and pley
 Right as the wood therwith shulde forshyuere,
 This ioly tyme, this fresshe first day of May.

1690

1695

The God of Loue, this worldis god myghti,
 Holdith this day his feste to fede and chere
 The hertis of vs poore louers heuy,
 Which only him to serue sett oure desere,
 Wherefore he doth affoyle the trees sere
 With grene, and hath the soyle yflowrid gay,
 Only to shewe his fest to more plesere,
 This ioly tyme, this fresshe first day of May.

1700

Myn hert, thou wost how Daungere hath on whi
 Doon thee endure full greuouse paynes here,
 Which doth the longe thus absent thi lady,
 That willist most to ben vnto hir nere,
 Wherefore the best advise y kan thee lere
 Is that thou drawe thee to disportis ay,
 Thi trowbely sorow therwith to aclere
 This ioly tyme, this fresshe first day of May.

1705

1710

My first in thought and last, my lady dere,
 Hit axith more then this, oon day leysere,
 To telle yow loo my greef and gret affray,
 That this wolde make myn hert a poore martere
 This ioly tyme, this fresshe first day of May.

f 33v

1715

Ch. 70, B XLVIII

1692 let us go to the forest to gather May blossoms together

1703 for the sole purpose of giving his festive company more pleasure

1705 . . . Daunger has wrongfully

1707-8 who causes you thus to be far away from your lady, [you] who most wish to be near her

B49

AS in writyng y putt haue my wisshis
 And that even in the depist of my thought,
 And yet, god wot, when all are made ther nys 1720
 But fewe of them that me prevaylen ought,
 Notwithstondyng, for me, y selle hem nought
 For all the good that man me geven myght,
 In dowl therin ther were mysdemyng oft
 Thorough false conspire of sum vnhappy wight. 1725

As neuyr more, god helpe me so as wis,
 Kan myn hert cesse the woo which is him wrou3t,
 So richely portrayde ar they lo that this
 That alway so to muse yet he ne rought.
 Thus baytith he, to he be so forfought 1730
 That even for shame he fayntith in his fight
 And dredith sore lest that he were mysthought
 Thorough false conspire of sum vnhappy wight.

When y am hushte hit mervayle to me is
 To here myn hert how that he talkith soft, 1735
 And so with Loue doth fester his woundis
 Which newe and newe hath hurtis to him brought.
 But what, he saith he set him well aloft
 And him depart a thousand ioy[is] light,
 But sore y drede lest they be from him rought f 34r
 Thorough false conspire of sum vnhappy wight.

© graunt me, Loue, forwhi full well thou ought,
 The ioy the which þou hast long to me ought,
 For well thou wost thou hast me comfort hight.
 Nought kan y say where þat thou haue me sought 1745
 Thorough false conspire of sum vnhappy wight.

Ch. 71, B XLIX

1728–29 [because] they [the wishes] are depicted so vividly in words that he [my heart] does not mind musing on them all the time

1736 . . . his wounds fester on account of Love

1738 . . . the heart says Love makes him happy

1745 ?I can not say where you have been seeking me [but not in the right place]

B50

BI God of Loue comaundid lo am y
 And bi the best and fayrist eek of Fraunce
 The castell of myn hert to fortify
 Which clepid is the Hold of Gret Plesaunce, 1750
 Stondyng vpon the Roche of Espeyraunce;
 And with Comfort so haue y him vitaylid
 Ayens Daunger and all his rude puysshauce
 Which y shall kepe to Deth me hath assaylid.

In this Castell ther are thre towris hye 1755
 Of which the first berith propir name Fyaunce-
 To-haue-socoure-and-that-right-hastily;
 And the secund is callid Remembraunce;
 The thridde is Stedfast Desyraunce.
 The wallis als so stronge are enbataylid 1760
 That ther nys wight may doon hit gret grevaunce,
 Which y shall kepe to Deth me hath assaylid.

Although Daunger seche weyes full slyly
 To rayue hit me and oft him doth avaunce,
 Yet of his thought he fynde shall the contrary 1765
 Spite of his hatrede and his gret vengeance,
 Sith that Good Right is of myn allyaunce,
 For Trouthe and he at nede me neuyr faylid
 To brynge reskuse, wherfore without dowtaunce
 This shall y kepe to Deth me hath assaylid. 1770

Lete vs make wache withouten deseyvaunce
 And goo we assayle with all oure ordenaunce
 Daunger, myn hert, which oft hath don vs waylid,
 And Mars vs graunt to wynne him bi sum chaunce
 Which y shall kepe to Deth me hath assaylid. 1775
Ch. 72, B L

1754 "which" refers to the castle in each refrain, except in the last instance, where it refers to the defeat of Daunger.

1772 and let us go to assail with all our artillery

THe next tyme, my lady and mastres,
 I come to yow to doon myn obeyschaunce,
 I wot y shall so ravisshe with gladnes
 That to yow speke woll want me the pusshaunce.
 So lese shall y my bifore countenaunce, 1780
 For when yowre bewte shyneth vpon me bright
 Myn eyen woll so basshe, bi God almyght,
 That y shall lese the sight out of myn hed;
 Myn hert also woll falle aswowne vpright—
 This is a thyng that gretly loo y drede! 1785

Wherfore as this, most excellent, fayre princes,
 When so ye se me in suche gouernaunce,
 As woll it plese yow of yowre gret humbles
 To pardone me, though y kan not avauce
 To doon to yow as were myn observaunce; 1790
 For aftirsone myn hert woll wexen light
 And telle yow hool his lijf, y yow bihight,
 Wher noon may here, forwhi in very dede
 He wot how Daunger wacchith day and nyght.
 This is a thyng that gretly loo y drede. 1795

Which evesedroppere doth, of his currishnes,
 Harke what he kan to doon me with hyndraunce,
 But what, yet truste y soo my wittis dresse
 That y shall fynde sum maner chevishaunce
 To mokke this karle (God geve him a myschaunce!) 1800
 And right well <vnaspide> of any wight,
 For though this nygard cast vpon vs sight
 Ye may not with his lookis blusshen reed
 Nor yet for alle the spies he hath pight!
 This is a thyng that gretly lo y drede. 1805

1779–80 that I shall lack to power to speak to you. So I shall lose my earlier composure

1797 see what he can do to cause me harm

1801 And [I will do it] entirely unseen by anyone

1803 You need not blush on account of his looking [at us]

Go, belle, and say that here my trowthe y plight.
 Had y my wisshe, y were <out> candill light,
 Even with the verry sorse of womanhed.
 I trust she wolde not slee her poore knyght—
 This is a thyng that gretly loo y drede! 1810
Ch. 73, B LI

WHat menyst þou, Hope? dost þou me skoffe & skorne?
 For wordis moche thou hast, and flateryng!
 How many tymys hast thou to me sworne
 (Thou cast desseyue me, vnto my semyng)
 That thou shuldist me vnto my lady bryng, 1815
 Which is the fayre, the good, and kynde princes
 That hath myn hert and evir shall in oon? f 35v
 For loue of God, as holde me thi promes,
 For whoo that absent is, is woobigoon.

Hit is long tyme apassid heretoforne 1820
 Syn y of Comfort had sight or felyng.
 Haue y not ay my sely devoure borne,
 To dewre my payne withouten gret grucchyng?
 Yes, yes, ynough and more! which tyme dewryng,
 Me thynke, as now deservith gret gladnes— 1825
 So semeth hit me ben dewe, bi God alon!
 But if y square y axe thee foryeuenes,
 For who that absent is, is woobigoon.

Yit were thi shame to geue me thus an horne!
 Make not of me thus light, a noforsyng, 1830
 Which trustith thee, and hath doon eve and morne
 In what thou dost to me in euery thyng.
 If thou may geve to me no more helpyng,
 Yet at the lest thou shewe me my maystres
 As oonys, allas, so that this grevous mon 1835

1824–25 . . . [my] enduring of which time . . . now deserves [a reward of] great joy
 1834–36 yet at least show me my mistress once, so that this grevous complaint
 [I am uttering] may put an end to [mark the end of] my great woe [“thou”
 (1834) repeats “thou” (1833).]

Acesyne may of my gret hevynes,
For who that absent is, is woo bigoon!

Ⓢ certis, Hope, thou makist fayre promessyng
To ordeyne for my carfull hert likyng.
Thou spekest fayre, that may y well witnes, 1840
But helpe me now or leue me, loo, the toon,
That y myght knowe the fyne of my distres;
For who that absent is, is woo bigoon.

Ch. 74, B LII

THis Dyane day, the first in moneth of May, 1840
Me thynkith a berith hem verry well to me, f 36r 1845
For right as y nave plesere to my pay
Within myn hert, but gret aduersite,
Right in lijk wise, god wott, is he to see
Fortrobelid als with thondir, wynde, and rayne.
A hath be wont more fressher forto be 1850
In tyme that y, afore this day, haue sayne.

Itrowe that he doth put him in assay
To bere me thus a frendly compane,
Of which y well content me bi this day,
For wrecchis whiche that are in thought heve 1855
As doth hit them a gret tranquyllite
To haue a felawe lyue with them in payne.
I wel haue profite this to my degre,
In tyme that y afore this day haue sayne.

Allas, y haue sene May so glad and gay, 1860
So full of plesaunce and felicite
That in a yere y koude not to yow say
The gret pleseris and the fresshe iolyte
That to eche wight, that tyme, was full rede,

1844 This Monday, the first in the month of May [see note]

1856-57 it gives them great comfort [calms their agitation] to have a companion live in sorrow along with them

For with the God of Loue, the lord souerayne, 1865
 Ther was no monthe myght do so moche as <he>
 In tyme that y afore this day haue sayne.

The tyme hit goth not (wot y how, parde!)
 But God amende hit sone of his povste,
 Forwhi Plesaunce to long aslepe hath layne, 1870
 That whilom lyvid full glad and full luste f 36v
 In tyme that y afore this day haue sayne.

Ch. 76, B LIII

B54

If Or loue of god, as kepith Remembraunce
 Within yowre thought enclosid pratily;
 Lete him not goon out of yowre gouernaunce, 1875
 Mi most bilouyd, myn hertis fayre lady.
 Do this, swete hert, no more in yowre party
 But well bithynke what ye vnto me hight,
 Eche poynt, and how that ye yowre trouth aplight,
 And what also ye made to me promes 1880
 When y me gafe to be yowre poor knyght
 And ye to ben my lady and maystres.

Ye wot right well, bi my long deservance
 And small desert, ye grauntid me mercy,
 And seide me this: vnto my most plesaunce 1885
 That me to loue ye sett were hertily
 As longe as ther were lijf in my body.
 Be ye my Iuge! ye wott where y say right!
 (Me were full loth to ley, bi God of myght.)
 This is no faynyd tale—no, no, dowltes! 1890
 For my promes y ioy hit day and nyght,
 And ye to ben my lady and maystres.

1865 for according to the God of Love . . .

1877 Do this (i.e., forget) . . . no more . . .

1882 and you [committed yourself] to be . . .

1883–84 . . . because of my long deserving and small reward . . .

1891–92 for I take pleasure night and day in my promise [to be your knight] if you are my lady . . .

But ther is dowl that doth me gret grevaunce
 Which y muste nede disclosen yow or dey
 Lest that ye haue forgot me in penaunce; 1895
 Forwhi this absent payne in which y dry
 Doth me for deth a thousand sithe to cry, f 37r
 That y thus long shulde ben out of yowre sight,
 And neuyr sith koude be so happy wight
 To haue writyng to sett me in gladnes. 1900
 Me thynke herin ye do me gret vnright
 And ye to ben my lady and maystres.

To brynge me from this carfull aturbaunce
 Withouten yow as nys ther remedy,
 Wherefore that y with humbil obeysaunce 1905
 Biseche yow to bithynke me, fer or ny,
 Which am yowre man, god wott, most vnworthi.
 Yet as y kan y do my sely myght
 Yow forto plese, and this with Absence fight
 I in my thought and were my lustynes; 1910
 But as for that, y putt him shall to flight,
 And ye to ben my lady and maystres.

What nede y more to say yow of my chaunce?
 Whi that y absent am, well wot ye whi.
 How may y als of ioy haue suffysaunce 1915
 Without hit come, dere hert, from yow only?
 How fynde ye me? Allas, am y not y
 That yow to serue am evir glad and light?
 For if ye fynde myn hert on elliswhere pight,
 As mot she which of Loue is gret goddes 1920
 Even with the deede don me to deth be dight
 And neuyr be my lady and maystres.

If that y sewrely knew, my ladi bright,

1896 For which reason this pain of absence that I endure

1899–1900 And never since [I last saw you] could I be so happy a person as to receive a letter [from you] to bring me joy

1914 . . . you know very well why

1920–22 may she who is the great Goddess of Love, with that deed, cause me to be condemned to death, and [may you] never be my lady . . .

How that yowre loue were steele vnto me clight, f 37v
 I wot y shulde forgete myn hevynes, 1925
 For Fortune koude sett me no more on hight
 And ye to ben my lady and maystres.

Ch. 77, B LIV

B55

ALlas! allas! how is hit heth gen entresse
 Vnto myn hert this woful tidyngis here?
 For told him is to his gret heuynes 1930
 That his most fayre and goodly swete hert dere,
 Whom he hath long tyme seruid feithfully,
 (O welaway!) doth now in seeknes ly,
 For which dispeyre he doth him silf confound,
 Wisshyng that he were depe graue vndir ground, 1935
 And saith how that his lijf doth him ennoy.

Joft haue goon to comfort him, dowltes,
 And bad him take no drede nor displekere,
 For, what, bi goddis grace, to his gladnes
 That hit nys deedly seeknes shall he here, 1940
 And that she shall be helid hastily.
 But what y say he settith not therby,
 Saue wayle and wepe and prayeth in euery stounde
 That he were in his wyndyng shete ywounde
 And saith how that his lijf doth him ennoy. 1945

When y say him he shulde leue his distres,
 For Fortune nys so crewell of manere
 To robbe this world of so gret a ricches
 Which is yowre verry lod sterre here & stere
 Of eche good thyng that hath more þen plenty, f 38r
 But what, he saith, "To trust is gret foly
 On Fortune which doth turne hir whele so round!"
 (This is comfourt that y haue in him found!),
 And saith how that his lijf doth him ennoy.

1928–29 . . . who has given these woeful tidings (here) entrance to my heart?

1934 For despair of which he destroys himself

1942 but whatever I say . . .

1949–50 who [i.e., the lady.] is your true lodestar (here) and steersman

God of thi grace, O thou God most myghti, 1955
 Harkith myn hert which prayeth thee humbly
 To suffir Deth geue him his fatall wound;
 Thus is he greid, woo doth him so abound,
 And saith how that his lijf doth him ennoy.
Ch. 79, B LV

B56

Right as y herde this othir day tofore 1960
 How my swete hert, myn owen fayre ladi dere,
 Was woxen hool (thankid be God therfore!)
 To telle it to myn hert y kan me stire,
 But then, alak! he hath so gret desire
 To knowe the trouthe that vnnethe, welaway! 1965
 He koude bithynke [. . .].
 His loue with drede doth he so entirmelle
 That he wolde say a thousand sithe a day,
 "O sende me tidyng, good Seynt Gabriel!"

I seide him, "Loo, myn hert, me grevith sore 1970
 That thou shuldist me mystruste in such manere
 Which am thi frend and haue ben euyrmore,
 To thynke that y shulde brynge thee lesyng here
 In vayne only to comfort thee and chere.
 Nay, leuyr yet had y no word to say 1975
 Than don thee wite that were no trouthe, mafay, f 38v
 For thou shall fynde me trewe, so truste me wele,
 Wherefore be glad and thee disport and play.
 O sende me tidyng, good Seynt Gabriel!"

My hert answerid and seide, "Right bi þi lore 1980
 So will y doon to drawe me to plesere
 That am with care and thought so all fortore.
 I shall retorne aftir my poore poware
 To ioy and well my payne and displelere,"

1957 to allow Death to give the heart his mortal wound.

1976 Than to inform you of that which is not true . . .

1983-84 I shall turn . . . my pain and misery to joy and weal

And gaf therwith to wepe his eyen tay 1985
 That alfordrownyd in salt teeris lay,
 And seide, "Now is it tyme, if euyr fel,
 To calle forth Hope, that fledde is me away.
 O sende me tidyng, good Seynt Gabriel!"

Als seide he me that he wolde, bi his fay, 1990
 Doon to be songe in Louys high chapell
 The masse which berith the name, as wel hit may,
 "O sende me tidyng, good Seynt Gabriel."
Ch. 80, B LVI

Allas, Deth, who made thee so hardy B57
 To take away the most nobill princesse, 1995
 Which comfort was of my lijf and body
 Mi wele, my ioy, my plesere and richesse?
 But syn thou hast biraft me my maystres,
 Take me, poore wrecche, hir cely serviture,
 For leuyr had y hastily forto dy 2000
 Than langwysse in þis karfull tragedy
 In payne, sorowe, and woofull aventure. f 39r

Allas, nad she of eche good thing plente,
 Flowryng in youthe and in hir lustynes?
 I biseche God, acursid mote thou be, 2005
 O false Deth, so full of gret rudenes!
 Had thou hir taken in vnweldynes
 As had thou not ydoon so gret rigure,
 But thou, alak, hast take hir hastily
 And, welaway, this left me pitously 2010
 In payne, sorow, and wooful aventure.

Allas! alone am y <out> compane.

1985 and thereupon set himself to wiping his (two) eyes

1999 . . . her miserable servant

2007–9 if you had taken her when she was [old and] infirm, you would not have been so cruel [done such a great cruelty], but you . . . have taken her with undue haste [i.e., in her prime]

2012 . . . I am alone without companionship

Fare well, my lady! fare well, my gladnes!
 Now is the loue partid twix yow and me,
 Yet, what, for then y make yow here promes 2015
 That with prayers y shall of gret larges
 Here serue yow, ded, while my lijf may endure,
 <Out> forgetyng in slouthe or slogardy,
 Biwaylyng oft yowre deth with wepyng ey
 In payne, sorow, and wofull aventure. 2020

☉ God, that lordist euery creature,
 Graunt of thi grace thi right forto mesure
 On alle the offens she hath doon wilfully,
 So that the good sowle of hir now not ly
 In payne, sorow, and wofull aventure. 2025
Ch. 81, B LVII

IN slepe ben leyd all song, daunce, or disport, 2015
 Also prays of bewte, bote, or gantillesse
 Now Deth, allas, hath, to my discomfort, f 39v
 Enrayfid me my lady and maystres.
 A, woofull hert, whos sorow kan not cesse, 2030
 Round with hir deth thou shulde haue tan thi bere,
 Dwellyng no more with ioy nor yet gladnes,
 For without hir of nought now lyue y here.

☉ myghti God, what am y, quyk or deed?
 Nay, certis, deed, this am y verry sewre, 2035
 For, fele y plesere, ioy, nor lustihed?
 Wo worthe the fate of my mysaventure!
 Nought lak y now but clothe my sepulture.
 O clothe me care sewte of my ladi dere,

2015–18 yet . . . therefore [on account of our love] I promise you here that I shall . . . serve you here on earth, [you] being dead, . . . without forgetfulness [born of my] idleness or indolence

2022–23 grant of thy grace to moderate thy justice in judging all the offences . . .

2028 Now [that] Death has . . .

2034 Or “what, am y quyk or deed?”

2038–40 Now I lack nothing but to prepare my grave. ☉O clothe me in my shroud, as my lady is clothed, [I] who find . . .

That fynde my silf an outcast creature, 2040
For without hir of nought now lyue y here.

Me thynkith right as a syphir now y serue,
That nombre makith and is him silf noon.
O cursid Deth, whi nelt thou do me sterue,
Syn my swet hert—syn my good sowl—is goon? 2045
Now may y say alone y goo, alon,
Savyng with Sorow, Payne, and Displesere,
With whos deth all welthe bicame my foon,
For without hir of nought now lyue y here.

I kepe no more of lijf then were my right, 2050
Forwhi hit were extorcioun in manere,
Wherfore y wolde my lijf sum nedy wight
Hit had, for now of nought as lyue y here.

No French

A Lone am y and wille to be alone 2055
—Alone, withouten plesere or gladnes
—Alone in care, to sighe and grone
—<Alone>, to wayle the deth of my maystres
—Alone, which sorow will me neuyr cesse.
Alone, y curse the lijf y do endure.
Alone this fayntith me my gret distres, 2060
Alone y lyue, an ofcast creature.

Alone am y, most wofullest bigoon,
Alone, forlost in paynfull wildirnes,
Alone withouten whom to make my mone,
Alone, my wrecchid case forto redresse, 2065
Alone thus wandir y in heuynes,

2043 that has no value in itself, but enhances another's value [as zero makes 1 into 10]

2048 with whose [i.e., the lady's] death all joy became my foe

2050–53 I have no more life in me than I have a right to [which is exceedingly little] because to have more would be a kind of illegal exaction, wherfore I wish that someone who needed it more had my life, for now I live here as a nothing.

2064 Alone without [anyone] to whom to complain

Alone, so wo worth myn aventure!
 Alone to rage, this thynkith me swetnes,
 Alone y lyue, an ofcast creature.

Alone! Deth, com take me here anoon, 2070
 Alone that dost me dure so moche distres!
 Alone y lyue, my frendis alle and foon,
 Alone to die thus in my lustynes.
 Alone, most welcome Deth, do thi rudenes,
 Alone, that worst kan pete, lo, mesure. 2075
 Alone come on; y bide but thee, dowltes.
 Alone y lyue, an ofcast creature.

Alone of woo y haue take such excesse,
 Alone, that phisik nys ther me to cure.
 Alone y lyue, that willith it were lesse; 2080
 Alone y lyue, an ofcast creature. f 40v
No French, see note

If Or dedy lijf, my lyvy deth y wite;
 For ese of payne, in payne of ese y dye;
 For lengthe of woo, woo lengthith me so lite
 That quyk y dye, and yet as ded lyue y. 2085
 Thus nygh a fer y fele the fer is ny
 Of thing certeyne that y vncerteyne seche,
 Which is the deth, sith Deth hath my lady.
 O wofull wrecche! O wrecche, lesse onys thi speche!

☉ gost formatt, yelde vp thi breth attones! 2090
 O karkas faynt, take from this lijf thi flight!

2071 who causes me to endure so much suffering alone!

2075 . . . whom pity least can temper

2078–79 I have taken such excess of nothing but woe, all by myself, that there is no medicine that can cure me.

2080 . . . who wish my life were shorter

2082–84 I blame my living death for my death-like life; I die for ease of my pain . . . because of the length of [time I have suffered] woe, woe prolongs my life very little [i.e., shortens my life]

2086 thus closely distant [from Death], I feel that distance [from it] is nearness

O bollid hert, forbrest thou with thi grones!
 O mestid eyen, whi fayle ye not yowre sight?
 Syn Deth, allas, hath tane my lady bright
 And left this world without on to her leche, 2095
 To lete me lyue ye do me gret vnright.
 O wofull wrecche! O wrecche, lesse onys thi speche!

What is this lijf, a lijf or deth y lede?
 Nay, certes, deth-in-lijf is liklynes,
 For though y fayne me port of lustihede, 2100
 Yet inward lo it sleth me, my distres,
 For fro me fledde is ioy and all gladnes,
 That y may say in all this world so reche
 As y is noon of payne and hevynes.
 O woofull wrecche, O wrecche, lesse onys þi speche! 2105

Ther nys no thing sauf Deth to do me day 41r
 That may of me the woofull paynes eche,
 But wolde y dey, allas, yet y ne may!
 [O wofull wrecche! O wrecche, lesse onys thi speche!]
No French

TOforme Loue haue y pleyd at the chesse B61
 To passe the tyme with cursid false Daungere 2110
 And kepte eche poynt bi good avysynes
 Withouten losse, to that (as wol ye here)
 That Fortune came to strengthyn his matere.
 O woo worthe she that my game ouyrthrew! 2115
 For tane she hath my lady, welaway!
 That y am matt, this may y se and say,
 Without so be y make a lady newe.

In my lady lay all my sikirnes,
 For ay at nede hir socoure was me nere 2120

2095 . . . without anyone who is her equal

2103-4 so that I may say [that] in all this world [there] is no one so rich in pain and woe as I

2106 Only Death himself can cause me to die

To helpe me in eche trobill or distres,
 For all my warde that kepte my lady dere
 More then knyght, that is of more powere,
 Or Afyn, pown, or rook (this fynde y trewe)
 For all my game y lost hit haue and pley 2125
 And all my good, god wot, that on hit lay,
 Without so be y make a lady newe.

Not kan y skyfte me from the sotilnes
 Of seytfull Fortune, with hir dowbil chere,
 That doth eche game so torne and ouydrresse 2130
 That where to drawe not wot y, there or here.
 She cometh on me in a so sodeyne gere
 That y may not myn harmes lo eschewe. f 41v
 Mi game is all forcast in suche aray
 That in no wise y hit amenden may, 2135
 Without so be y make a lady newe.

f fare wel, princess! yowre losse sore doth me rewe
 And evir shall vnto myn endyng day,
 For shulde y thenke rekewre me now? Nay, nay,
 Without so be y make a lady newe! 2140

Ch. 82, B LVIII

S Hulde y me make a lady newe? Fy! Fy!
 Nay, rathir dey than doon so fowl a dede!
 Nas she selfe same y chees to my lady,
 Owt secund choys, vnto that y were deed?
 Nas she als she that had of goodlihed 2145
 More then of worldis an hool thousand payre?
 For when she lyuyd she fayrist lyuyd in dede
 Right as the fenyx lyveth withouten ayre.

2122 for my queen maintained (i.e., continued to act as) my primary defense

2130 who changes the course of and reverses each game


2143–44 was she not the very same I chose to be my lady, without any second choice . . .

2145–46 was she not also the one who had more beauty/graciousness than [could be found in] a full thousand pair of worlds

But of the asise (as these clerkis seyne)
 Of this Fenyx, ther cometh an othir blyue, 2150
 But me to thynke, god wot, were but in vayne
 To se such on in all my paynyd lyve.
 What nedith me, allas, hir to discryue?
 Hir prays doth ay vnto eche ere repeyre.
 She ded is (what nede y more prays contryue?), 2155
 Right as the Fenyx lyueth withouten ayre.

Then shulde y false, allas, so goodly on?
 And shulde y breke the trewthe y to hir hight? f 42r
 Nay, rathir man as leuyr were y noon,
 For whi y thenke most how y am a knyght, 2160
 The oth therof, and oth y to hir plight,
 Reuoluyng als this lijf, a chere fayre,
 To loke how sone she deyde, the fayrist wight,
 Right as the Fenyx lyueth withouten ayre.

To loue a fayre this wayffyd y my trouthe; 2165
 To chese a fowle y am not of that layre.
 Lef of, my penne! she deyde, she deyde, more routhe!
 Right as the Fenyx lyvith withouten ayre!
Ch. 87, B LXII


Bfte in my thought full besily haue y sought,
 Ayens the bigynnyng of this fresshe newe yere, 2170
 What praty thyng that y best yeven ought
 To hir that was myn hertis lady dere,
 But all that thought bitane is fro me clere
 Sith deth, allas, hath closid hir vndir cley
 And hath this world fornakid with hir here. 2175
 God haue hir sowle, y kan no bettir say.

2149 But of the ashes . . . of this phoenix . . .

2151–52 but for me to expect . . . to see such a one again in my whole sorrowful life would be [a] vain [hope]

2159 I would rather that I were not a man (i.e., I would rather die)

2165 To love [another, new] fair [lady], I would thus set aside my oath

But forto kepe in custome lo my thought
 And of my sely seruice the manere
 In shewyng allys that y forget hir nought
 Vnto eche wight y shall to my powere, 2180
 This dede, hir serue with massis and prayere,
 For, A! to fowle a shame were me, mafay,
 Hir to forgete this tyme that neigheth nere.
 God haue hir sowle, y kan no bettir say. f 42v

To hir profit now nys ther to ben bought 2185
 Noon othir thyng, all wol y bay hit dere;
 Wherefore, thou lord that lordist all aloft,
 Mi deedis take, suche as goodnes stere,
 And crowne hir, Lord, within thyn hevenly spere
 As for most trewist lady, may y say, 2190
 Most good, most fayre, and most benygne of chere.
 God haue hir sowle, y kan no bettir say.

When y hir prayse or praysyng of hir here,
 All though it whilom were to me plesere,
 <Yit> fill ynough hit doth myn hert to day 2195
 And doth me wisse y clothid had my bere.
 God haue hir sowle, y kan no bettir say.

Ch. 83, B LIX

When y revolve in my remembraunce
 The bewte, shappe, and þe swete eyen tayne
 Of hir y callid "myn hert hool plesaunce, 2200
 Mi lyvis ioy, my sovl lady souerayne,"
 Of eche good thewe that was þe fressh fountayne,

2177–81 But to maintain remembrance [of her] in my usual manner and the customary manner of my miserable [love] service, in order to show (also) to all men that I have not forgotten her, I shall . . . serve her, thus dead, . . .

2182–83 . . . it were too foul a shame to me . . . to forget her in this season that approaches

2186 . . . even though I am willing to pay dearly for it

2188 "My deedis" refers back to "massis and prayere" (2181).

2195 yet it fills my heart [full] enough to [make it] die

2200 of her I called "my heart's whole pleasure"

Which newly Deth hath tane (O welaway!)
 For which y say, with wepyng eyen tay,
 That this world nys but even a thyng in vayne. 2205

In tyme apast ther ran gret renomaunce
 Of Dido, Cresseid, Alcest, and Eleyne
 And many moo, as fynde we in romaunce,
 That were of bewte huge and welbesayne, f 43r
 But in the ende, allas, to thynke agayne 2210
 How Deth hem slew—and sleth moo day bi day—
 Hit doth me wel aduert, this may y say,
 That this world nys but even a thyng in vayne.

Me thenkith that Deth cast bi his gouernaunce
 Forto distroy all worldly plesere playne, 2215
 Forwhi he doth therto his gret puysshauce
 That hath, allas, so moche fayre folkis slayne,
 And dayly slethe. What ioy doth he refrayne
 Out of this world and bryngith in such dismay,
 For without them, y iuge this, mafay, 2220
 That this world nys but even a thyng in vayne.

God of Loue, thou may perseyue, certayne,
 To myn entent, that Deth thee warrith ay,
 So se y wel but though hit menden may
 That this world nys but even a thyng in vayne. 2225
Ch. 84, B LX

B65

The ioly tyme, the first, fresshe day of May,
 Mi fortune fill to be in compagne
 The which þat were, a verry trouthe to say
 Repleet of grace and passyng gret bounte,
 For which, forto <expelle> all thought heue 2230
 That we shulde chese, ordeynyd to vs was,

2216 because he puts forth his great power for that purpose

2224 so I see clearly that unless it improves

2230–31 for which reason, in order to expell all dismal thoughts [it] was decreed that we should choose

(Right as that Fortune lust agide the caas)
 The leef, so fresshe and full of gret verdure
 Or ellis the flowre, so fayre and soot to smelle.
 I took the leef to me all yere to dwelle
 As that tyme was myn hap and aventure.

f 43v

And aftir this bithought me sone, mafay,
 That rightwisly the choyse was falyne me,
 For syn thorough deth y lost haue (welaway!)
 She which was sorse and flowre of all bewte
 Which was my loue, my swet hert and lade
 That only had ytane me to hir grace
 And callid me hir loue (Alas! Alase!),
 Of othir flowre, god wott, y take no quere,
 Forwhi the destene that to [me] felle
 And thought accordith passyng welle
 As that tyme was myn happe and aventure.

2240

2245

Wherfore y schesse the leue, as well y may,
 Forth all this yere or more, so may hit be,
 And strength hit shall y onto my power alway
 Ageyns them which that warrith his parte.
 Thenke not y haue to no flowre enmyte,
 But bere it hoo to bere that good wel hase,
 For in the flowre myn hert had chose his place
 Owt ellis where choys of any creature,
 Which now with deth is fadid euery dele;
 That louyd me hit nedith not to telle,
 As that tyme was myn happe and aventure.

2250

2255

Ther nys leef nor flowre that doth endewre

2239–44 “syn” governs the clause that runs to “loue” (2243).

2242 who had taken me alone into her favor

2244–46 I am not interested . . . in [any] other flower, wherefore the lot [i.e., the leaf] that befell me and [my] sorrow accord very well.

2250–51 and I shall always support it to [the extent of] my power against those who war against his [the leaf’s] side

2253 but [he] who wishes to [may] bear it

2255 Without choosing any other living being

2257 That [she] loved me need not be said

But a sesoun, as sowne doth in a belle, 2260
 Yet fond y ese with them to entirmelle
 As that tyme was myn happe and aventure. f 44r
Ch. 85, B LXI

THe secund day of fayre, fresshe lusty May
 As half in slepe, in slombir half wakyng,
 Me mette this sweuene in spryngyng of þe day, 2265
 How to me came a flowre this resonyng
 Me, and seide, "My frend, y had trustyng
 Whilom, that thou had holde on my parte,
 But now me thynke thou hast forgotten me
 And strengthist lo the leef ageyn me sore. 2270
 I merveyle wherin y haue greuyd thee;
 Me thynke y haue deservid not wherfore."

Sore basshid y when y this herde hir say,
 Aftir my rewde havoure this answeyng,
 "Moost goodly flowre, God helpe me so alway, 2275
 As y thought neuyr doon ayenst yow thyng
 Yow to displese, but happe of such chesyng
 The leef to serue this heyre hath made me he.
 Ought ye therfore me blame then? nay, parde,
 Syn so to doon is vsid evirmore, 2280
 And ye me blame as for my poore dewte,
 Me thynke y haue deservid not wherfore;

"Als yow in cheef that do y honoure ay
 What part y am as is me well sittying
 All for oon flowre that me was tane away 2285
 In tyme apast (God graunt vs sone metyng
 In paradice the howre of my deiying!);

2261 "Them" refers to the "compane" of 2227.

2268 in the past, that you would have held to my side [that of the flower].

2277-78 . . . the chance event of such choosing has made me one to serve the leaf this year

2281 if you blame me . . .

2283-85 Since I honor you always above all others, the side I support [that of the leaf] suits me well entirely on account of one flower that was taken from me . . .

O flowre! wherfore ye not displeid be, f 44v
 For cause therto, well wote y, noon nave ye,
 Though that y levys were a thousand skore! 2290
 Whi blame ye me? Whi shewe ye crewelte?
 Me thynke y haue deservid not wherfore!

“The trouthe is this, hit light is forto se
 —God be my Iuge, y kan no ferthirmore:
 For where ye seme y axen shulde merce 2295
 Me thynke y haue deservid not wherfore.”
Ch. 87, B LXII

B67

J Haue the obit of my lady dere
 Made in the Chirche of Loue full solempnely
 And for hir sowle the service and prayere,
 In thought waylyng, haue songe hit hevily, 2300
 The torchis sett of Sighis pitously
 Which <were> with Sorow sett aflame;
 The tovmbe is made als to the same
 Of karfull cry depayntid all with teeris,
 The which richely is write abowt 2305
 That here, lo, lith withouten dowl
 The hool tresoure of all worldly blys.

☉ Of gold on <hit> ther lith an ymage clere,
 With safyr blew ysett so inrichely
 —For hit is write and seide how the safere 2310
 Doth token trouthe, and gold to ben happy—
 The which that welbisetith hir hardily,
 Forwhi hit was an ewrous, trewe madame

2288 . . . for this reason [just given] do not be displeased

2290 Though I wear a thousand score of leaves!

2295 whereas you think [it] fit [that] I should ask for mercy

2300 “hit” refers back to “service and prayere.”

2301–3 [I have] set [up] the torches of Sighs piteously, which were set aflame with Sorow

2304 all stained with tears of sorrowful lamentation

2308 “Hit” refers to the tomb.

2313 For she was a favored, faithful lady

And of goodnes ay flowren may hir name,
 For God, the which that made hir, lo, ywys, f 45r
 To make such oon me thynke a myght ben prowte,
 For, lo, she was (as right well be she mowte)
 The hool tresoure of all worldly blys.

☉ pese, no more! myn hert astoneth here
 To here me prayse <the> vertu lo trewly 2320
 Of hir that had no fawt, withouten were,
 As all the world hit saith as well as y
 The whiche that knew hir deedis inthorowly.
 God hath hir tane, y trowe, for hir good fame,
 His hevne the more to ioy with sport and game, 2325
 The more to plese and comfort his seyntis,
 For certis well may she comfort a rowt
 (Noon is she saynt), she was here so devowt,
 The hool tresoure of all worldly blys.

Not vaylith now, though y complayne this, 2330
 Al most we deye therto, so lete vs lowt,
 For ay to kepe ther is no wight so stowt
 The hool tresoure of all worldly blys.

Ch. 95, B LXIX

Syn cursid deth hath taken my maystres B68
 Which y most louyd, as satt me well trewly, 2335
 I must now take my deth in hevynes,
 For lengir lyue y may not here, but dey;
 So that even for defawt of ioy only,
 Thus ynly seek, y make my testement,
 Which y haue write in sorow here, and care, 2340
 And humbly as y kan y hit present f 45v
 To alle that trewly loue, where so they are.

2328 (Though she is not [technically] a saint) . . .

2331 besides, we all must die, . . .

As first of alle, vnto the hy nobles,
 To God of Loue, in deth y here that ly
 Bitake my sowle with spirit of humbles, 2345
 Bisechyng him convey hit of mercy
 Vnto his blis, and saue <hit> as wisly
 As that y haue ben trewe in myn entent
 Him forto serue (though y vnworthi ware),
 As y dare well yet putt in the iugement 2350
 To alle that trewly loue, where so they are.

ferthirmore, y wolde my gret ricchesse
 Of loue, the which that y with payne did by,
 That hit departid ben to huge largesse
 To suche as trewly loue and serue, but y 2355
 Wol not hit partid be to frawdres, fy!
 —For had y leuyr yet to se hit brent!
 Hit is no charge to me how ille they fare!
 That swere y here in dethis hard turment
 To alle that trewly loue, wher so they are. 2360

Without sparyng my gold or yet money,
 Trough, wolde y biried be my lady by,
 Which me is glad the tyme is to me lent,
 And fare wel now this world of ioy so bare,
 And as for my last wille: this bill be sent 2365
 To alle that trewly loue, where so they are.
Ch. 96, B LXX

J Was long tyme oon of the company 2369
 Of Loue and ware my tyme of lustynes, f 46r
 And God of Loue (y thanke him hertily!)

2343–45 First of all, I who lie here near death entrust my soul with humble spirit
 to his majesty, the God of Love
 2350 . . . submit to the verdict [of]
 2354 that it be distributed with great liberality
 2359 That I swear here in the throes of death
 2363 [for] which [burial] I am pleased [that] the time has come to me
 2365 . . . [it is that] this document be sent
 2369–70 And the God of Love . . . gave me an abundance of his goods

Of his goodis departid me larges, 2370
 But at the last, allas for gret distres,
 Mi welthe bicomme my wo, my ioy my payne;
 Thus in amverse eche ese y ouyrdres
 That all is broke and newe to make ayene.

Full lite, or lasse, as had y went, trewly, 2375
 That ther had ben in loue such dowbilnes,
 For eche man saith it is the lijf ioly
 In which ther is more swete and gentilnes,
 But y, allas, may othirwise witnes,
 For whan y was as in my loue most fayne 2380
 And went had lyvid in my gret gladnes
 <Then> all is broke and newe to make ayen.

But what! yet Loue y trust yet or y dy
 As of sumthyng to helpe me, moche or lesse,
 For the service y owe his regally 2385
 As feithfully as my poore wit koud dresse,
 Withouten fraude or yet newfangilnes
 Or anythyng that is to him ayen.
 This swere y bi my trouthe—but neuyrtheles,
 Thus all is broke and newe to make ayen. 2390

☉ loue, ordeyne me of thi gret goodnes,
 That y no more cause haue to complayne,
 Nor thus biwayle my lijf in hevynes
 That all is broke and newe to make ayen. f 46v
Ch. 89, B LXIV

IN the Forest of Noyous Hevynes, B70
 As y went wandryng in the moneth of May 2395
 I mette of Loue the myghti gret Goddes,

2373–74 thus I reverse each pleasure into its opposite, so that . . .

2375 Truly I had suspected very little [i.e., hardly suspected], or even less

2378 . . . more sweetness and graciousness [than in any other]

2381 and had expected to live in my [newfound] great joy

2385 in return for the service I owe his highness

Which axid me whithir y was away.
 I hir answerid, "As Fortune doth convey,
 As oon exylid from ioy (al be me loth), 2400
 That passyng well all folke me clepyn may
 "The man forlost that wot not where he goth."

Half in a smyle ayen of hir humblesse
 She seide, "My frend, if so y wist, ma fay,
 Wherefore that thou art brought in such distresse, 2405
 To shape thyn ese y wolde my silf assay,
 For heretofore y sett thyn hert in way
 Of gret plesere. Y not whoo made thee wroth.
 Hit grevith me thee see in suche aray,
 The man forlost that wot not where he goth." 2410

"Allas!" y seide, "most souereyne good princesse,
 Ye knowe my case, what nedith [me] to yow say?
 Hit is thorough Deth, that shewith to all rudesse,
 Hath fro me tane that y most louyd ay,
 In whom that all myn hope and comfort lay. 2415
 So passyng frendship was bitwene vs both
 That y was not—to fals Deth did hir day—
 The man forlost that wot not where he goth.

"Thus am y blynd (allas and welaway!) f 47r
 Al fer myswent, with my staf grapsyng wey, 2420
 That no thyng axe but me a graue to cloth,
 For pite is that y lyue thus a day,
 The man forlost that wot not where he goth."

Ch. 88, B LXIII

Plesaunt Bewte had woundid sore myn hert
 In tyme apast so deepe and large, trewly, 2425
 That with the strok Loue at the wound in stert

2398 who asked me where I was going

2401 so that very appropriately everyone might call me

2407 . . . I set your heart on the path

2414 [he] has taken from me [the one] whom I loved most always

And kept him there right long and privyly;
 But what, now late (y thanke God <hertily>
 A good surgeoun, the which is callid playne
 No-care-of-that-is-passid-here-bifore, 2430
 Hath heelid me of my grete grefis sore,
 Without so be the wounde renewe agayne.

When that myn hert him silf did hool aduert,
 He thankid him his heele right humbly,
 Him axyng where without more greef or smert 2435
 That he endure shulde of suche malady.
 He him answerid (me thought right wittily),
 "Yes, and [thou] kepe thi brest a yere or twayne
 From wynd of loue and blasty sighis sore;
 Thou art now in good hele and kepe this lore, 2440
 Without so be the wounde renewe agayne.

Beware surfett (if thou wolt lyue in quart)
 Of plesere which will crepe in at an eye,
 Right as Yowthe woll them to thee conuert
 Which rewlid thee (thou wotist as wel as y), f 47v
 That sett afyre—and that so sodeynly—
 The poore loggyng as wherin that thou lay,
 With hoot desire that brennyd euyrmore,
 But that fyre is aqueynt and from thee tore
 Without so be the wounde renewe agayne." 2450

That y am hool hit is me very fayne,
 Bi this surgeoun y told yow heretofore,
 And heraftir y haue all loue forswore—
 Without so be the wound renewe agayne.

Ch. 90, B LXV

2434–36 he thanked the doctor humbly for his cure, asking him whether he would live without more injury or pain from such a wound

2440 . . . if you take this advice

2442–45 Beware [of] surfeit of pleasure (if you want to be healthy) which will creep in through your eyes, just as Youth, who ruled you . . . , wants them [the eyes] to convert you [to love]

2449 But now that fire is quenched . . .

B72
2455

WHan fresshe Phebus, day of Seynt Valentyne,
 Had whirlid vp his golden chare aloft,
 The burnyd bemys of it gan to shyne
 In at my chambre where y slepid soft,
 Of which the light that he had with him brought
 He wook me of the slepe of Heuynes, 2460
 Wherin forslepid y all the nyght, dowltes,
 Vpon my bed so hard of Newous Thought.

Of which this day, to parten there bottyne,
 An oost of fowlis semblid in a croft
 <Me> neye biside and pletid ther latyne 2465
 To haue with them, as Nature had them wrou3t
 Ther makis forto wrappe in wyngis soft,
 For which they gan so loude ther cries dresse
 That y ne koude not slepe in my distres
 Vpon my bed so hard of Newous Thought. 2470

Tho gan y reyne with teeris of myn eyne f 48r
 Mi pilowe, and to wayle and cursen oft
 My destyny, and gan my look enclyne
 These birdis to, and seide, "Ye birdis ought
 To thanke Nature (where as it sittith me nou3t) 2475
 That han yowre makis to yowre gret gladnes,
 Where y sorow the deth of my maystres
 Vpon my bed so hard of noyous thought."

Als wele is him this day that hath him kaught
 A valentyne that louyth him, as y gesse, 2480

2455 . . . on the day of St. Valentine.

2459 With which light . . .

2463 Whereupon on this day, to choose what boots them [i.e., their mates]

2465-66 [they assembled] close to where I lay and pleaded [their case in] their [bird] language [which was] to have their mates with them, as Nature had ordained (for them)

2477 whereas I mourn the death of my beloved

2479 "Als" is redundant.

Where as this comfort sole y here me dresse
Vpon my bed so hard of Noyous Thought.

Ch. 91, B LXVI

- B73
- H**ere many peple playne
On Loue and on his crewelte,
How he doth hem adewre in payne 2485
Ther loue and in aduersite,
And al for lightly (soth to sayne)
They wold to grace amyttid be
Withouten greef, but wot ye playne:
He first shall fynde (what so he be!) 2490
The amverse of his weele, certeyne.
- S**o thenkith hit [hath] a rath brayne
And more yet to desire, parde,
For to the trewe the trowth must rayne
As at the last to get merce 2495
Though first hit passe a yere or twayne
That they abide in poore degre, f 48v
Yet at the laste, forto ben fayne,
Long to endure a must be he
The amverse of his weele certayne. 2500
- T**he louer trewe that doth not fayne
Ay diligent in his degre
Forto deserue a thank agayne,
Ought he not bet it haue, seme ye,
Then he bi force that wolde restrayne 2505
A loue, maugre her volunte?

2481 whereas I provide for myself only this comfort [i.e., the thought that others succeed]

2487 and all because with little effort . . .

2490 a lover shall first find . . .

2492-93 He who thinks so [to gain his lady's grace easily] is rash, and even more [rash] to desire [to do so]

2494 i.e., loyalty must be proven through time.

2499 he must be he [one who] endures for a long time

2505 than he who would restrain by force

Who wolde a lady so constrayne,
 A shall fynde in his pechere
 The Amverse of his weele certayne.

But when a lady longe hath seyne 2510
 Hir man in suche perplexite,
 Though Pite full aslepe haue leyne
 She must awake him, of bounte,
 In amverse of his wele certayne.
Ch. 97, B LXXI

Woofull hert, forcast with heuynes B74
2515
 Forto ben draynt in teeris feele þat rayne,
 Allas, rathir then lyue in such dures,
 Forbrest and part the lijf bitwene vs twayne
 And rewe my lijf, all rewe <thou> not thi payne,
 For though that ay to sorow thou not reche 2520
 Yet with the deth almes me, pore wreche.

Rarfull Seufan that waylith ay in woo, f 49r
 Which clepid is the Goddes of Turment,
 Nadde neuyr half the greef thou hast, no, no,
 Wherefore me thynke as this in myn entent: 2525
 Hit sitt thee best that thou vnto hir went
 And loke of yow which kan best sorow strecche
 And with the deth almes me, poore wrecche.

Who so that lust aqueynt him silf with sorowe 2530
 As come to me and seche no ferthir wey;
 I haue ynough to lene who woll it borowe,

2507-8 Who would so constrain a lady, he shall find in his sin
 2515-16 . . . tossed about with care so as to be drowned in [the] many tears that
 rain down
 2519-21 and take pity on my life, though you do not take pity on your own pain,
 for although you do not ever pay any attention to sorrow, yet do an act of charity
 by giving me death . . .
 2527 and see which of you [the heart or Tisiphone] has the greatest sorrow

Nor recche ageyne though they me nevir pay,
 And yet, allas, hit kan not doon me day,
 But, Antropos, <at> ones thi dewte fecche
 And with the deth almes me, poore wrecche. 2535

Thus ay diyng y lyue and neuyr deed—
 O Lacchesse, to longe thou makist thred!
 Als flex to moche doth Cloto to <hir> recche.
 O onys with deth almes me, poore wrecche!

No French

Aftir the day, that made is for travayle, 2540
 Ensewith nyght, the werre in to rest.
 So now but late Slepe gan me so assayle
 That to him yelde me thought it for þe best,
 Which all the day in karfull payne had lest,
 So that to doon y made myn apparayle 2545
 To gon to bedde, syn daylight did me fayle
 And that the sonne was closid in cloudis west.

As y was leyde, in slepe y was lightly, f 49v
 And in my slepe y met right as y lay
 That (as me thought) y sy right well trewly 2550
 Bifore me stonde a man with lokkis gray
 Which y not knew—and yet y had him say,
 For which that with my thoughtis writhid y
 That y so had forgote him folily
 And even for shame oon word ne durste him say. 2555

2532–34 nor do I care if the borrowers never pay me back, and yet, alas, my sorrow cannot cause me to die, but, Atropos, get what is due to you at once
 2538 also Clotho hands too much flax to her
 2541 follows night, in which to rest
 2544–46 [I] who had continued all day in miserable pain, so I made preparations to do that, [i.e.,] to go to bed . . .
 2547 and the sun was covered by clouds in the west.
 2548–50 When I had lain down, I fell asleep quickly, and in my sleep I dreamed just as I lay there that . . . I saw . . .
 2552 . . . and yet I had seen him

He stent awhile and aftir resonyd me,
 Saiyng, "My frend, ne takist thou of me cure?
 Hit am y, Age, that writyng brought, parde,
 Vnto Childhode as from Dame Nature,
 Dischargyng hir of thee the noriture; 2560
 And vnto Youthe to rewle bitook y thee,
 Which hath thee gouernyd longe in nycete
 Nought havyng Resoun hit forto mesure.

"Now Resoun, which that doth eche wrong redresse
 And passith them, hath made a gret compleynt 2565
 Vnto Nature on thee and thi maystres
 Of wrong doon. Y drede thou wolt be taynt.
 Avise thee now, for Yowthe y se hir faynt!
 For Yelde, the modir of vnweldynes,
 That all downe betith in hir crewelnes 2570
 Not for thi good caste with thee to aqueynt!

"And hir to fle thee botith not, no, no!
 Nor trust that Yowthe kan ayde þee, wot þou what,
 Hit were foly. But with honour lo
 Thou mayst depart as now from Loue algate, f 50r
 For Loue and Elde are falle at gret debate,
 Wherefore, or thou be take with Louys foo,
 Departe from him; thou shalt not greue him so,
 Syn deth as this hath tane thi lady late,

"Forwhi alle suche as is hem wel sitting, 2580
 That flowre in yowthe and in ther fresshe corage,

2558 It is I, Age, who brought a writ . . .

2563 not having reason to temper it [Youth's folly]

2564–66 Now Reason, who rights all wrongs and excells them [all those I have mentioned], has written a serious formal complaint against you and your mistress, Youth

2568 i.e., your youth is passing.

2571 intends to make your acquaintance, but not for your good!

2577–78 . . . before you are captured by Love's foe [Elde], depart from him [Love]; you will not anger him by doing so

2580–81 for all to whom love is suitable, who flourish in youth . . .

What game also make they and what skoffyng
 When they se Elde is falle into dotage
 Saiyng, 'O God, what ioy yond drye ymage
 May do vnto a fayre lady likyng!' 2585
 Bothe yong and olde thus goon bei lo mokkyng
 When they se Elde right as a colt to rage.

"This mayst thou now leve Loue to thyn honewre,
 In siithe that no charge in gouernaunce
 Is thee bileft. Also noon, be thou sewre, 2590
 Kan say thou dost it for fawt of puyshaunce,
 But rathir say hit is for displesaunce
 That thou full fayne wolst cloth thi sepulture
 Syn Deth hath from thee tane the creature
 Which is thi first and last in remembraunce; 2595

"Wherfore biseche thou Loue right humbly,
 If hit like him, to yelde thee thyn homage
 That thou him made (most poore and vnworthi!)
 Bi levying him thyn hert so in morgage, 2600
 And thank him eek the welthe of his servage
 That he thee gaf, of his gret curtesy;
 This mayst thou hem depart out mawgre f 50v
 To thi worship, as yet in myddil age.

"Eche louer, als, biseche thou with reuerence
 That noon of them with thee displesid be 2605
 For anythyng doon in thyn Innocense
 As while that thou were in ther company,

2582 "Also" belongs with "skoffyng."

2584-85 'Oh God, what joy that shrivelled sight can give for a lovely lady's pleasure [to please a lovely lady]!'

2588-89 Thus may you leave Love without losing your honor, since no duty in (your) care is left to you. . . .

2591 can say that you are leaving Love . . .

2596-2601 wherefore, ask Love very humbly, if it pleases him, to return to you your homage which you gave to him ([though it was] most poor and unworthy) by leaving him your heart as a pledge [of your allegiance to him], and thank him also for the joy he gave you by allowing you to serve him of his great beneficence; thus you can depart from him without dishonor to your good name . . .

2607 i.e., one of their company.

Syn in this case that they must iugen thee.
 So axe pardoun if they ought fynde offense,
 And graunt thi service to the excellence 2610
 Of Loue and alle his folkis, he or she.

“**T**hus mayst thou part lo from þe ponysshment
 Of God of Loue out havyng charge at hert.
 This is my reed; now do thyn owen entent.
 Als, truste not Fortune, with hir chere covert, 2615
 Which woll flatir to brynge thee fresshe in smert,
 Saiyng she hath the sokoure to ben lent
 And that she dayde not—though þi lady went;
 Wherefore, beware, and hir dissayt avert!

“**I** wot right well this: and thou hir here 2620
 Thou wolt hir counsell rathir chese than myn
 Which axe wol thee whi thou hast left hir clere.
 But ware lest she eft brynge thee not in pyne
 That now nast cause, this wost þou wel & fyne,
 But in No Care thou leve may suche plesere 2625
 And flet thi craft so full of displese,
 The which full long in payne of hit hast lyne.

“**A**nd also this to comfort thee agayne 261r
 She woll the promes of amendement
 Of alle hir wrongis doon to thee and payne 2630
 As that hit right is and conveyent;
 But at the last be war of hir dissent,
 For what he be she makith lo most fayne
 At last she makith him woo, this dar y sayne.
 Wher this be trewe, y putt in thi iugement.” 2635

2615 Also, do not trust Fortune, with her face hidden.

2617–19 saying [that] she has succor to grant to you and that your lady did not die—even though she did; wherefore, beware, and watch out for her deceit!

2620 . . . if you listen to her

2624 [you] who have no cause [to feel pain] now [since you have no lady currently] . . .

2627 [you] who have lain . . .

2629 she will promise you redress

2633 for whoever he may be [whom] she makes most happy

Even in a brayd therwith y stert and wook,
 With hert tremblyng as leef of apsen tre
 Saiyng, "Allas! nevyr such dreem me took
 That made my poore hert so ynheve,
 For if that Nature will no more, parde, 2640
 That y shall vpon fayre folkis loke,
 I wot that Elde woll take me bi sum croke
 That with more sorowe woll aqueynten me."

Yet neuyrtheles y thus me well bithought
 This man, that in my slepe did calle him Age, 2645
 Had seid me trouthe—I knowe he gabbid nought—
 That Elde had out a Writt tane of dotage
 To tache me with, yn maugre my visage,
 And as in Yowthe nas socoure to ben sought,
 Thus nyst y lo what best was to ben wrought, 2650
 But even format stood like a dombe ymage.

But what, agaynst hir comyng yet, mafay,
 Y will purvey my silf, ellis were y nyse,
 Wherefore from Loue y shall depart away
 And to his hond yelde vp all myn office, f 51v
 For when Elde seth y <left> haue my service,
 Hir only forto folow as y may,
 I shall the lesse hir greven, dar y say. . .
 And yet gret payne to folow hir ther lyse.

This shall y doon as now, what so bifalle, 2660
 Withouten change of othir newe purpos:
 Even clene renounce here Louys werkis alle.
 Hit is tyme rest myn hert, y me suppos,

2644–46 Yet nevertheless I made up my mind [that] this man . . . had told me the truth—I know he did not lie—

2648–49 to apprehend me with, in spite of all I could do, but because even Youth could not help me

2651 but stood completely confounded . . .

2652–53 . . . yet I will prepare myself against her coming, else I were foolish

2659 And yet great pain lies in following her

2661 without change [of intention] or other new plan

2663 it is time to rest my heart, I posit

To shette myn eyen and als myn eeris close
 And ordayne so that me nevir shall 2665
 Loue haue entre thorough Plesere at all.
 I knowe the craft to wel me to forlose.

Who so that kast him silf to kepe from loue,
 When slepy rest he felith his hert hath take,
 Prysonne his eyen, lest that ellis they him move, 2670
 For if thei goon at large they wol him wake,
 So here and there woll they him plukke & shake,
 And him to loue they wol, out resoun, shoue,
 And say how hit is most [to] his bihoue
 For his plesaunce sum fayre lady make. 2675

Yn myn owen hert all this werk know y pleyne,
 Forwhi long tyme hit was me agreable
 That in this world me thought nothyng, certeyne,
 So good as loue nor yet so honowrable,
 For y haue founde in writyng full notable 2680
 How that Loue hath, bi his myght souereyne,
 A wrecche ymade a lord—this hath ben seyne; f 52r
 To many folke thus is he profitable.

But y not knew that tyme, how that ther was
 Loue forto kepe so gret aduersite 2685
 With the poore hert that stant in Louys cas,
 But now y knowe, for which that y am he
 That haue gret cause forto bithynken me
 That feele myn hert forfayntid now—allas!—
 Which willith neuyr in his lyvis spas 2690
 More melle with Loue for no thyng that may be.

2665–67 and to arrange [it] so that Love never shall have any entry into me at all through [the gate of] Pleasure. I know the art too well to be beaten.

2670 [must] imprison his eyes . . .

2673 and they will force him to love, reason being absent

2678 so that nothing seemed to me . . .

2682 . . . —this has been seen

2684–86 ?But at that time I did not realize [that] Love would continue in such great adversity against the poor heart caught in his snare

Wherfore that y, withouten more respite,
 Wol make a bill in maner of request,
 And how it is bifalle me in it write,
 And when that hit is redy at the lest 2695
 I shall hit bere, when Loue next holdith fest,
 To shewe him (rudely as y kan endyte)
 What paynys feele ther is (and smal profit!)
 In pursewyng of Lovis hard conquest.

And thus of Loue and his goode folkis alle 2700
 I wol take leue in my most lowly manere,
 But to yvill sayers stoppe my mouth y shall
 That turne to ylle all that they se or here;
 Thus may y lo rekewre bi fayre <rekewre>
 The promys which that made me to him thrall, 2705
 The which, god wott, all had y power small,
 I gaf it him with myn hool hert entere,

And from his hondis thus to take myn hert f 52v
 Which y him leyde bi obligacioun
 The more sewrete to doon him so aduert 2710
 Of my service without condicioun,
 Whiche service, with recommendacioun,
 I shall delyuer (bothe of ioy and smert)
 Vnto yong folke to loue hem to convert
 Of lovis werk, bi resignacioun. 2715

Ch. 99-105, "Songe en complainte"

§

Dnto the excellent power and nobles
 Of god Cupide and Venus þe goddes

2704-5 thus may I recover by fair request the pledge . . .

2707 "it" repeats "the which," which in turn refers to "promys."

2708 "To take" is parallel to "rekewre" (2704).

2709-10 which I advanced as security the more surely to cause him to be heedful

2712-15 which service, both of joy and pain, I shall, in abandoning Love's business, deliver, with greetings, unto young people to convert them [to love]

- B**isechith this vnto yowre regally
 Most humbly
 Yowre servaunt, Charlis Duk of Orlyaunce, 2720
 Which (sauē yowre grace) therto most vnworthi
 That suget ly
 Vnto yowre most digne and royall obeyshaunce
 That most willith do, to his puysshaunce,
 Yowre plesaunce 2725
 And hath therin dispendid largely
 His tyme of yowthe in the self governaunce
 Owt displesaunce
 In all he ought, for payne or greef trewly
- T**hat if so lo hit were to yowre plesere 2730
 To graunt him here
 This poore request he doth to yow present, f 53r
 Withouten refuse, tane of displelere,
 Him forto here, 2735
 In which ther nys but trowthe vnto yow ment
 (So helpe him God, that knowith his entent),
 For where ye lent
 Of welthe and ioy ynow him forto chere,
 The cursid Fortune hath it fro him hent
 And geue turment 2740
 Hym forto slee and makke a porre martere
- T**horugh cursid Deth (allas! the tyme, allas!)
 That out trespass
 In the most flowryng of hir lustynes

2718 The subject of "bisechith" is "Charlis": Charlis (2720) . . . bisechith . . . yowre regally [your highnesses] (2718) . . . to graunt him (2731).

2721 "Which" and "that" (2724) are parallel and both refer back to "servaunt" (2720).

2726-29 and has spent his youth lavishly in that function in that same activity [i.e., pleasing you], without discontent, in all he owed, in spite of pain

2733-35 without refusal to hear him on account of your displeasure, in which [request] . . .

2737 for whereas you granted

2740 and given torment [in place of it]

2743 who without fault [on the lady's part]

Hath from him tan (wo worth the cas!) 2745

The which that was

His verry sovl lady and gladnes,

For which only he hath ymade promes,

In his distres

(As clene dispayrid all his lyvis space) 2750

That neuyr more he chesen shall princes

Nor maystres,

The who his hert consentid to hit has,

Wherfore that he, in tyme tofore or now,

Yow made a vow 2755

Trewly to serue yow vnto his power,

Also he left (wel wot ye how!)

His hert with yow

To ben his plegge of feithfull trewe desire,

The which that now yow humbly doth requere, f 53v

Out displekere,

Of yow to pardone him, as well ye mow

Therof, for, to he beddid haue his bere,

As more to lere

Of loue he nevyr cast him silf to bow; 2765

Wherfore if so hit lust yowre curtesy

And grace frely

To graunt him haue ageyne his sely hert

And als the wothe that he lete with hit ly,

That worshipfully 2770

He myght depart, without more greef or smert,

2746 she who was

2748 for which reason alone . . .

2753 whose heart has consented to it

2760-65 who humbly asks you now, without being displeased, to pardon [release] him from it [that vow], as you well can, because, until he dies, he never intends to submit himself to learn more of love. "Of yow" apparently duplicates "yow" in 2759.

2766-67 Wherefore, if it suit your good will and graciousness . . .

2769-70 and also the oath . . . so that with due honor [accorded to you]

That hath in trust, he hath no more desert,
 Gef ye aduert
 His service doon vnto yowre regally,
 Which sat him nere than euyr sat him shert 2775
 Full couert,
 Thus shewe yowre grace to hem þat for hit cry

And call to yow yowre secretary this,
 Which namyd is
 Good Trouthe, and to comaunde him loo 2780
 A lettir forto make, him to dismys
 Of all servis,
 Doyng to wite vnto all folk also
 That, with his hert, at large ye lete him goo
 Withouten moo, 2785
 As quyt discharge of all bond and promys,
 For yowre welwillere ay and not yowre foo
 (For neuyr no f 54r
 Was he yet so—God helpe him now as wis!),

So that yowre seid bisecher may 2790
 Fre goon alway,
 Out any lett his fredom to restrayne;
 As thorough yowre writyng forto say,
 So for him lay
 That he is not to blame, certayne, 2795
 Though that from yow he him refrayne
 Syn Deth hath slayne
 The fayre, soote flowre þat was his lady ay,
 Which of alle fayre myght bere a name souerayne;
 (Allas for payne, 2800
 How had he hert to doon hir forto day?)

2772 [with] what he has [i.e., had left] in trust, he has deserved no more (i.e., no less)

2780 "To comaunde" is parallel with "shewe" (2777) and "call" (2778).

2786–87 as entirely released of all feudal obligations, to be seen as your wellwisher.

2792 Without any hindrance . . .

2794 so [in addition] set down on his behalf

2796 though he remove himself from [your court]

If this to doon hit listith yowre nobles
 As of almes,
 Yowre suppyaunt a stonidith in good cas
 To ben alightid of his heuynes 2805
 And gret distres
 [. . .] his hert in newe solas,
 Ay praiyng for yow in his lyvis spas
 That good gras
 Come to yow bothe, the god and eek goddes, 2810
 For the gret welthe he had within yowre plas
 While he ther was
 In his fortime of yowthe and lustynes.
Ch. 105-108, "La Requeste"

§

B75

When that next approchen gan the fest
 Of Loue and semblid was his parlement, f 54v
 I only did present him my request, 2815
 The which he redde bi good avisement
 And seide, "My frend, of thi grevous turment
 I sory am, so truste me very sewre,
 But what may y doon thee recurement, 2820
 Syn geyne the strok of deth ther is no cure?"

"Putt all suche mynde and sorow from þi brest
 And all the rage of suche grevis feruent,
 Eek shewe thi silf a man and not a best,
 For if lo in this payne thou be forshent 2825
 Thorough thi self wille, hit axith ponysshement,
 For resoun ought to rewle eche creature.
 Ay forto wayle, what helpith such talent,
 Syn gayne the strok of deth ther is no cure?"

"Pluk vp thyn hert and make a newe conquest 2830

2803-4 as an act of mercy, your suppliant is in a good position

2820 but what remedy may I give you

2828 . . . what good does such passion do

And thou fro me shalt haue suche socoure sent
 That thou shalt wynne sum lady at the lest
 Forto aply vnto thyn owen entent
 In all to hir that is conuenyent
 Bothe yong and good and fayre of eche feture. 2835
 Thou mayst ben glad to haue such happe þe lent,
 Syn geyne the strok of deth ther is no cure."
Ch. 108, "La Departie d'Amours en Ballades," I

B76
 "Allas sir! allas sir! pardoun me,
 For while y lyue hit may not be!" quod y,
 "I promyse yow bi faith of my bode 2840
 As neuyr eft to chese loue nor lade. f 55r
 Plesaunce and y han partid company
 The which that hath all ioy tane fro me clos.
 No more therof, y pray yow hertily,
 Forwhi y am full ferre from that purpos! 2845

"What nede of yow these wordis spoken be?
 Leue ye me not? allas, wene ye y lye?
 Or ellis for yowre disport thus don hit ye
 To skorne at me, forwhi, sir, verily,
 Me semeth now hit were a gret foly, 2850
 When that y may my silf of loue repos,
 To take on me suche thoughtfull charge hevy,
 Forwhi y am full fer from that purpos.

"Aquyt y haue me to my poore degre
 Of my service vnto yowre regally; 2855
 From this tyme forth y wol no more ben he.
 Wherefore, as lustith lo yowre curtesy,
 To graunt my bone y pray yow humbly,
 For me not lust with yow to iape a glose

2833–34 [unto whom] to devote your own heart in all that is fitting to her
 2851 when I can keep myself away from love
 2855–56 of my service due unto your highness; from this time forward I will no
 longer be he [who serves you]
 2858–59 . . . I beg you humbly to grant my request, for I do not wish to jest
 flatteringly with you

Nor neuyr did, nor shall to that y dy, 2860
 Forwhi y am full ferre from that purpos.”
Ch. 109, II

B77

When Loue had well parceyvid myn entent
 And sigh my purpos wolde not chaungid be,
 He seide, “My frend, y had well othir ment
 Thou wolde haue doon as at request of me 2865
 And not so sone forsaken this my fee;
 But what, syn now y see thou wolt it nought,
 I here agraunt it lo vnto the free f 55v
 As the request thou hast to me bisought.

“Thee to geynsey <ner> me conuenyent, 2870
 For trewe service thou hast me doon, parde,
 Nor nevyr knew y that thou othir ment
 In weele nor thought, but ay in oon degre
 Redy to doon in all that satt to thee
 For any greef or payne þat were thee wrou3t; 2875
 Wherefore to graunt thee now y woll ben he
 As the request thou hast to me bisought.

“And for that alle shall knowe wel how þou went,
 With my good will, out hatrede or maugre,
 Ye shall haue by my court of parlement 2880
 A quytaunce geve, bi which þat alle may se
 That y relesid haue thee, he or she,
 Of all homage that thou vnto me ought
 Wherefore as wel content [thee] lo that we
 Graunt thee request thou hast to vs bisought.” 2885
Ch. 110, III

2864–66 . . . My friend, I had wished otherwise [of you, i.e.,] that you would have done as I asked and not so soon forsaken in this way your service to me

2868 I grant it [your request, 2869] to you freely.

2870 It would not be fitting for me to refuse you

2872–75 nor did I ever know that you desired to do anything else in will or thought, but were always . . . ready to do all that befitted you in spite of any mental torment . . .

2882 “He or she” refers back to (and is equivalent to) “alle” in 2881.

2885 grant the request you have asked of us

B78

For which that Loue anoon full ryally
 Assemblid <had> his court of parlement,
 Tofore hem alle my case declarid y
 As bi ther licence and comaundement
 Where as anoon ther graunt vnto hit went
 That y shulde haue a quytaunce ful frely
 Of all service and made my bond be rent
 To doon withall what that y wolde, trewly.

2890

And so myn hert, that y lete for me ly
 In hostage that y trewe and diligent
 Shulde ben to Loue, y of ther curtesy
 Bisought them fayre to haue delyuerment
 The which that Loue had longe in gouernement.
 This axid y, and alle they with oon cry
 Seide, "Ye, ye, ye! We woll therto consent
 To doon withall what that a woll trewly!"

f 56r

2895

2900

On knees downe y fell right humbly
 To thankyn Loue the grace he hath me lent,
 For where as in an exstreme forto dy
 Myn hert lay, he deed hit to him hent
 And bi Comfort so hath it to me sent
 Wrappid in blak, and y full esily
 Put it into my bosom, well content
 To doon withall what that y lust trewly.

2905

Ch. 111, IV

2889–90 with their permission and at their request, whereupon they gave their consent at once

2892 . . . and caused my deed of obligation to be torn up. "To doon withall" (1293) refers back to "quytaunce" (2891), not to "bond" (2892).

2894–95 And so my heart that I had deposited as a pledge that . . .

2897–98 begged them courteously to release, which [i.e., my heart] Love had in his control for a long time

2900–2901 . . . we will consent to that [i.e., to return his heart], to do therewith that which he truly wishes

2906 and via Comfort thus has sent it to me

B79

When that y had myn hert and my quytaunce, 2910
 Mi gost therwith was woxen light trewly,
 And nerpeles <yit> for the aqueyntaunce
 I had of God of Lovis regally
 And of the folkis of his company,
 When y shuld take my leue of them agayne 2915
 The departyng well nygh did me dy,
 That of wepyng y koude me not restrayne.

Loue gan perceyue my carfull countenaunce
 And seide, "My frend, y pray thee hertily,
 If ther ben ought as vndir my puysshauce 2920
 To doon thee ese, ne spare it not hardily." f 56v
 But then y was so woofull and heuy
 That y to him oon word koude speke agayne
 —Oon word? no, nor half oon, verily,
 That of wepyng y koude me not restrayne, 2925

But thus departid y in displesaunce
 From Loue which that made a chere drery,
 And as a man forravishid in a traunce
 I took my leue and so departid y,
 And Comfort seide that he wolde gon me by 2930
 For whidir to goon not wist y, soth to sayne—
 Myn eyen so fordreynt in teeris ly
 That of wepyng y koude me not restrayne.
Ch. 114, V

B80

Comfort and y thus went in hondis tayne,
 And to the gate he gan me to conway, 2935
 Forwhi Loue, the myghti kyng souerayne,
 Had chargid him to sett me in the way

2915 when I had to take my leave . . .

2920–21 if I can do anything in my power to comfort you, do not fail [to ask] it boldly

2923 that I could speak (not) one word to him

2927 from Love, who assumed a sad countenance

To goon where as y wolde my selvyn say,
 Which was vnto an auncient, oold manar,
 Wherin long y had in childhod lay, 2940
 Which callid is the Castell of No Care.

Dnto Comfort y gan me thus complayne,
 Him praiyng not to leue me all that day,
 Lest that y me myswent, forwhi certayne
 Bi Displesere y myght the hard cawsay 2945
 Ellis take where Elde hath so fele ioyes slay,
 But and we not this nyght oure labour spare,
 We shall wel come vnto the place, mafay, f 57r
 Which callid is the Castell of No Care.

So long we roode [that] at the last, to sayn, 2950
 We come as where that we the castell say,
 So at the yate we light, to telle yow playne,
 And the porter, that knew vs well bothe tay,
 Anoon the gate gan open with a kay,
 Which to vs seide, "Ye bothe, right as ye ar, 2955
 Welcome. Y kan not paynt my wordis gay."
 [Which callid is the the Castelle of No Care]
Ch. 114, VI

B81

The rewler of this habitacioun
 Hight Tyme Apast, which with glad countenance
 Seide me, "Wanton, haue ye yet found sesoun 2960
 To come and take here this poore soiournaunce?"
 I seide him, ye, if hit were his plesaunce
 Not to eschewe my wrecchid company,
 To dwelle with him it was myn affyaunce
 And there to bide vnto that howre y day. 2965

2947 but if we push on tonight

2950-52 We rode so long that finally, to be sure, we came to [a place] where we saw the castle, so we dismounted at the gate . . .

2955-56 who said to us, 'You two, just as you are, welcome!' . . .

2964 it was my solemn promise to dwell with him

So told y him of all the gret chesoun
 That did me parte from Louys gouernaunce.
 He to me seide, a trouthe y had resoun,
 When he had ouyrrred all my quytaunce,
 And so y prayde him kepe it, in substaunce, 2970
 For which that he gan thanke me hertily
 Of that it lust me take so poore pitaunce
 And there to bide vnto that howre y dy.

The next morow y wrote or rose the son, f 57v
 (For Comfort home to Loue wolde nede avaunce) 2975
 In which y made recommendacioun
 Of his goodnes and wrot him all my chaunce,
 Which Comfort took and gan home with hit prauce
 Loue to report how Passid-Tyme and y
 Were falle into a fresshe newe acqueyntaunce, 2980
 And there to bide vnto that howre y dy.
Ch. 115, VII

§

To the high and myghti lord of gret nobles
 Cupide, prince of all worldly gladnes,

Most excellent, most high & nobil prince,
 Most myghti kyng in eche rewm or provynce, 2985
 As humbly as that servaunt kan or may
 Recomaunde his lord and maystir ay,
 So recomaunde y me, or more, to yow,
 And also y am he, as thenke ye how,

2968–71 He said to me that, in truth, I had reason (to leave Love), when he had read through my whole quittance, and so I asked him to keep [and preserve] it . . . , for which reason

2972 that it pleased me to accept his modest hospitality

2976–77 in which I commended [Comfort] for his goodness and wrote Love concerning all that had happened to me

2979 to report to Love . . .

2981 and [how I was] to stay there [with him] until my death day

2987 recommend himself ever to his lord and master

That most desire to here of yowre nobles 2990
 And yowre estat, which God so encres

To as moche honoure as y <you> desire
 To haue, or more then y kan write yow here,
 Of which y wolde biseche yow me endite
 Bi eche comer, if it plese yow to write, 2995
 Forwhi to here of yowre honure and wele
 Hit is my verry ioy and hertis hele,
 And if it plese myght to yowre regally
 To knowe my fare, of yowre gret curtesy,

I am in hele (thankid be God of all), f 58r
 Ioyfull at hert, for thought nave y at all,
 For Tyme-Apast in his Place of No Care
 Resceyvid me in right goodly manere
 To sojourne so as long as likid me
 Vnto that y with Elde atachid be, 3005
 For then y wot y must, withouten more,
 Fynysse [m]y lyue—this thought me grevith sore

And sleth my hert to haue the remembraunce—
 But what y yet am fer fro hir puysshance,
 For small it is that yet y sett hir by 3010
 Which stond at large without[en] iewparty;
 Als, wot ye well, y haue sent yow Comfort
 Which gidid me vnto this poor resort
 Callid No Care (for which that hertily
 I thanke yow of his good company), 3015

Which he hath doon bi yowre comaundement
 With right good hert and ioyfull, glad entent,
 To whom as plesith yow to gefe fyaunce

2994 Of which estate [2991] . . .

3006–7 for then I know I must die immediately . . .

3009–11 except that I am far from her [Elde's] power, on account of which I set little store by her as yet, [I] who remain at liberty [i.e., he is still far from old] . . .

3016 "Which" refers back to "gided" (3013).

3018–27 To whom, if it please you to rely on [the truth of] that which I trust him

Of that y trust him say yow in substaunce
 (The which bi mouth kan telle it yow more playne 3020
 Then y kan write) and eek such thyng agayne
 As towchith me, y pray yow him to here,
 And also pardone me y yow requere

That y kan not write to Yowre Excellence
 As that y ought yow my dewe reuerence, 3025
 Forwhi it is the faut of vnkonnyng
 That stoppith me to doon my welwillyng; f 58v
 Als ferthirmore y axe yow here mercy,
 For y knowe well y fawtid fowle trewly
 When that y last departid from yow loo, 3030
 Forwhi y was so verry full of woo

That oon poore word y koude not to yow make
 Nor as y schulde my leue loo from yow take,
 But y thanke yow as humbly as y may
 Of welthe y had vndir yowre lordship ay. 3035
 No more as now y write yow verily
 But that God which is most myghti
 Sende yow honoure and long lijf to endure
 And that ye may alwey the gret figure

Surmount of Daunger, maugre all his myght, 3040
 Which euyrmore doth warre ayens yowre right.
 Wrete in No Care, the date yowe to remembre
 As on the thrittenthe day of Novembre,

Bi the trewe Charlis, Duk of Orlyaunce,
 That sumtyme was oon of yowre pore servaunce. 3045
Ch. 116, lines 487-550

to tell you in general . . . and also [of] things which pertain to me [personally], I pray you to listen to him [Comfort], and I also ask you to forgive me that I cannot express in writing to Your Highness the proper reverence that I owe you, for it is the lack of skill that stops me from expressing my good will.

3022 "him" repeats "to whom" (1318).

3035 for the happiness I had . . .

3037 except (to wish) that God . . .

3042 Written at [the Castle of] No Care, the date given as a matter of record

§

OF Passid Tyme the plaster of No Care
 Vnto myn hert so long and soft hath leyne
 That y am hool, now am y right wel ware,
 Of euery greef (God thanke y him certayne),
 So that y trust y nevir shall agayne
 Falle in the self diseise to that y dey
 The which is callid Lovis Malady.

B82

3050

f 59r

And yet myn eyen doth all that in hem are
 To spy abowt if so ther myght be sayn
 On plesaunt bewte for him on to stare
 Inliche to hir that me forthrew in payne
 That oft of me did thynne the chekis rayne,
 Which brought also vnto my company
 The which is callid Louys Malady.

3055

Myn eyen fast they loken here and thare
 But so well chaste ar they now bothe tayne
 That for Plesaunce vnnethe as dar thay sqvare,
 And yet y lete them renne vpon the playne,
 Forwhi as now (the more lo am y fayne)
 I drede but lite, or yet more lesse trewly,
 The which is callid Lovis Malady.

3060

3065

When y se folkis now on loue complayn
 I laughe as that myn hert shulde brest atayne,
 Forwhi hit is so plesaunt a foly

3046–47 The plaster of No Care of [applied by] Time Past has lain against my heart for so long and so softly

3053–56 and yet my eyes do all they can to discover whether there might be in view a beautiful lady for them to gaze on like her . . .

3057 who [my eyes] often drenched my lean cheeks [with tears]

3059 that which is called Love's malady

3061–63 but they are now both so well chastened that at [the appearance of] Plesaunce [i.e., plesaunt bewte] they hardly dare to step out of line, and yet I let them run loose

The which is callid Lovis Malady. 3070
Ch. 120, LVVIII

B83

Baladis, songis, and complayntis—
 God wot they are forgote in my party,
 Forwhi ennoy and thought so forfayntis
 Me that y in slouthe aslepe so ly,
 But to achase fro me all thought hevvy, 3075
 How rewdely that y do, y shall assay
 Where that y kan, as y was wont to, say,
 <Or> at the lest my labour nyl y spare, f 59v
 All wot y well my selven this, mafay:
 That euyrmore my tonge woll turne away, 3080
 Forwhi y fynde him rollid in No Care.

All plesaunt wordis in me disyoentis;
 So am y all forsotid in foly
 That all such art in me now detayntis,
 But where y fayle, y pray yow hertily 3085
 That rede my werk and kan doon bet þan y,
 Where as y fayle, ye lust amende hit ay,
 Forwhi in rage yowthe so full of play
 Hit made was, wherfore, howso y square,
 Forgef it me, forwhi vnto this day 3090
 I wold hit mende but what my tonge ne may,
 Forwhi y fynde him rollid in No Care.

The speche of loue so fressshely depaynt is
 With Plesere, where loue settis hertily

3073–74 . . . makes me so faint that I thus lie slothfully asleep

3076–81 however crudely I do [it], I shall try [see] whether I can make [a poem] as I used to, or at least I will do my best [to do so], although I know this well, certainly: that my tongue will always turn away [from making songs], because I find him wrapped in No Care

3084 that all such art [of composing] is held back in me

3090–91 . . . for until the present [from then till now] I would like to amend it, except that my tongue cannot

3093–96 ?The speech of lovers (where love sits sincerely) is brightly adorned with Pleasure, who [?that] always again and again makes himself known [i.e., is a friend] to them to speak for what pertains to them.

That ay from fresshe to fresshe them aquayntis 3095
 To speke for that as doth vnto them ly,
 For when that y was in ther company
 I for my silf gan fast seche wordis gay—
 And fond them well—that now ly in decay
 (So haue y them forspent), y wot not whare, 3100
 And, tho that are bileft me oon or tay,
 Mi tunge hem wrestith fer out of aray,
 Forwhi y fynde him rollid in No Care.

But here y make my Iewbile or y day,
 To doon louers for my sowle to pray, f 60r
 And yet y wott my speche hit wol not fare
 But thorough Good Hope, y thus my labour lay,
 And yet for fere my tonge saith “Nay, nay, nay!”
 Forwhi y fynde him rollid in No Care.

Ch. 119, LXXII

B84
 3110
But for bi cause that deynte lo is leef
 Which doth oft tyme the grose mete sett aside,
 That is the cause that motoun, veel, or beef,
 Nor pigge, nor goos y cast yow noon provide,
 But and ye lust so poore a fare abide,
 Insteade of mete, y fede yow shall with song, 3115
 And for mysyse though that my wordis glide
 Take them aworth y pray yow alle among,

And for folk say “short song is good in ale”
 That is the cause in rundell y hem write.
 The swettist mete, als, is of birdis smale, 3120
 As quaylis rounde and eek the larkis lyte.

3097 “Ther” refers to lovers.

3102 my tongue twists them out of their proper order [or perhaps strains the words from their proper usage]

3110–11 But because a delicacy is pleasing, which often causes the plain food to be set aside

3117 accept them kindly, I pray you all together

But what, all this y putt hit in respite,
 For fowlis alle reherse here were to long,
 But loke wherto ye haue yowre appetit
 And seke hem in this disshis forthe among 3125

Parde, folk sayne that lovers lyue bi lokis,
 And bi wisshis and othir wanton thought,
 Wherefore sum thing y trust in this bok is
 To fede them on, if hit be well out sought,
 And if so that hit him prevaylen ought, 3130
 Without they konne me thonk, thei don me wrong,
 For with laboure y haue it for hem bought f 60v
 As them to plese and fede them with among.

Wherfore as this vnto yow louers all,
 Here is my fest, if hit plese yow to fong 3135
 (But pardon me that hit is lo so small),
 At sum tyme if y mende hit shall among.
No French

This May that Loue not lusten forto slepe R1
 But doth his folke in nyse conseitis wake, f 61r
 Ther nys as now suche thoughtis me to take, 3140
 For in myn ere may noon suche fleis crepe.

Then mervell it is not (who takith kepe)
 Thoug that y me my silf full mery make

3122 . . . I shall abandon all this [my intention of enumerating all the small birds with which I might feed you]

3124–25 but decide what you would like to eat and look for it [those things that please you] among these dishes

3130 and if it be of any use to them

3135 . . . if you will agree to accept it

3137 on the understanding that (?) I shall improve it here and there at some later date

3138–39 This May in which Love does not wish to sleep but causes his people to lay awake with wanton notions [thoughts]

3141 for no such thoughts may disturb me

This May that *Loue not lusten forto slepe*
 But doth his *folke in nyse conseitis wake.* 3145

When that y slepe y nethir wake nor wepe,
 For ther nys in me sech thoughtis blake,
 And evyr so y cast hem of to shake
 In this most ioyous lijf my silf to kepe

This May that *Loue not lusten forto slepe* 3150
 But doth his *folke in nyse conseitis wake,*
Ther nys as now suche thoughtis me to take,
For in myn ere may noon suche fleis crepe.

Ch. 204, Chanson I

Now holde him silf from loue, let se þat may, R2
 For, as for me, y may kepe me no more; f 61v
 I nede must loue for any greef or sore,
 And yet y not what happe wol to me way, 3155

Forwhi oft tyme y haue herd folkis say
 That trowbill gret is ther in Lovis lore,
 Now hold *him silf from loue, let se þat may,*
 For, as for me, y may kepe me no more.

My hert gan him acquaynt the tothir day 3160
 With Bewte, which so cherid him therfore
 That hir to serve he hath him silf yswore—
 Teys doon; he <hers> is and wol be to he day.

Now hold *him silf from loue, let se þat may,*
 For, as for me, y may kepe me no more; 3165
 I nede must loue for any greef or sore,
 And yet y not what happe wol to me way.

Ch. 204, C II

3146 When I sleep I neither keep waking up nor cry in my sleep
 3148–49 and I intend always to shake them off thus in order to keep myself in
 this most joyous life
 3155 and yet I do not know what sort of fortune I will receive
 3161 . . . who consequently treated him so hospitably

WHat so be that y say, *parde*,
 Of Loue or of his gret rigure,
 Yet this for trouthe y yow ensure:
 A lady haue y chosen me,

R3
 f 62r

Fulfillid of grace and gret bounte
 Surmountyng euery creature
 What so *be that y say, parde*,
 Of Loue or of his gret rigure.

3170

But nevirtheles yet am y he
 That dar not out his hert discure,
 Yet alsolong as that y lijf endure
 I hiris am and evir so will be

3175

What for *be that y say, parde*,
Of Loue or of his gret rigure,
Yet this for trouthe y yow ensure:
A lady haue y chosen me.

Ch. 205, C III

IS she not full of all goodly manere,
 The which y loue in my most feithful wise?
 God helpe me so, as when y hir avise,
 In all this world me thynkith not hir pere!

R4
 f 62v

Ye louers, now how say yow? lete vs here—
 What is she worth? let se, sett to a prise!
 Is she not *fulle of alle goodly manere*,
 The which y loue in my most feithful wise?

3185

In daunce or song, laughtir or sobir chere
 Or what she doo, in ought that to hir lise,
 Say yowre verdit. Let trowthe be iustice
 And flatir not, on trouthe, y yow requere—

3190

Is she not *fulle of alle goodly manere,*
The whiche *y loue in my most feithful wise?*
God helpe me so, *as when y hir avise,*
In alle this world *me thynkith not hir pere!*

Ch. 206, C IV

Syn that y haue a nounparall maystres
The which hath hool my service & myn hert,
 I shall be glad for any greef or smert
 To serve hir in hir goodly lustynes,

R5

f 63r
 3195

for now y trust to haue, dowltes,
 More ioy then ther be stichis in my shert,
Syn that *y haue a nounparall maystres*
The whiche *hath hool my service & myn hert.*

3200

Though to envyous hit be hevynes
 And sorow gret, to don hem prike and stert,
 Yet, bi my trouthe, when that y me aduert
 Ther displesere, hit is my gret gladnes,

3205

Syn that *y haue a nounparall maystres*
The whiche *hath hool my service & myn hert,*
I shalle be glad for any greef or smert
To serve hir in hir goodly lustynes.

Ch. 206, C V

God, how that she lokith verry fayre,
The goodly swete, my very hertis blis,
 That for the grace the which þat in hir is
 To eueri wight hir prays doth newe repayre.

R6

f 63v
 3210

Who is it he that kouthe hit loo contrayre?
 For hir bewte renewith ay ywis.

3202 Though it vex and sadden [be vexation and great sorrow to] the envious
 3211 her praise is heard again and again by everyone

☉ God, how *that she lokith verry fayre,*
 The goodly *swete, my very hertis blis!* 3215

She hath no peere, she lyvith withouten eyre
 (Of alle the fayre y except noon as this),
 For in hir loo ther nys oon poynt amys.
 Tis a dere hert worth a thousand payre.

☉ God, how *that she lokith verry fayre,* 3220
 The goodly *swete, my very hertis blis,*
That for the grace the which pat in hir is
To eueri wight hir prays doth newe repayre.

Ch. 207, C VI

BI God but oon, my verry plesaunt Iay, R7
 Myn hert even full is of gladnes f 64r
 When y biholde the yowthe and lustynes
 Of yowre body with long, streight sidis tay, 3225

Forwhi the lookis of yowre eyen gray
 Thei putt me out of all hevynes.

Bi God but *oon my verry plesaunt Iay*
Myn hert even fulle is of gladnes,

Albe that cursid speche—ywill mote they day!— 3230
 Full often tyme han doon me gret dures,
 But care ye not, lady maystres,
 Forwhi the more y loue yow lo alway.

Bi God but *oon my verry plesaunt Iay*
Myn hert even fulle is of gladnes 3235
When y biholde the yowthe and lustynes
Of yowre body with long, streight sidis tay!

Ch. 207, C VII

3216–17 . . . she lives without heir (I include all the beauties in my comparison, with no exceptions)

3222 By the one God, my truly delightful Joy

3230 even though wicked speech [of slanderers]—may they die wretchedly!—

Now say me lo myn hert, what is þi reed?
 Ne is hit best y to my lady goo
 And telle hir of my dedly greef and woo
 That y endure thorough hir goodlihed?

R8

f 64v

Loo, for thi wele and for hir womanhed
 Reson wol not <ye> vttir hit, no, no!

3240

Now say me, lo, myn hert, what is þi reed?

Ne is hit best y to my lady goo,

forwhi y wot she is so good in dede
 That harme a were and mercy were hir fro.
 How thenkist thou? nyst best þat y do so?
 O comfort me, that am so full of drede!

3245

Now say me, lo, myn hert, what is þi reed?

Ne is hit best y to my lady goo

And telle hir of my dedly greef and woo

That y endure thorough hir goodlihed?

Ch. 208, C VIII

AS> oon swete look of yowre eyen tayne—
 Which Wikkid Speche doth fro me refrayne—
 As wisshith hit me at lest as often loo
 As y haue thoughtis on yow, where y goo—
 Of yowre fayre body and streight sidis playne.

R9

f 65r

Wot ye wherfore, my verry ioy souerayne
 Whom y most loue? God wot y do not fayne
 As for my trouthe—if cause ye fynde, no moo!—

3255

3245 that it would be a pity if mercy were absent from her.

3250–54 I desire a single, sweet look from your eyes—which Slander frequently prevents—at least as often as I think of you, wherever I am—of your beautiful body and your straight, smooth flanks.

3255–57 Do you know why [I desire one sweet look], my true, sovereign joy whom I most love? God knows I am not just pretending to be loyal—if you find it so [reward me] never again!

*As oon swete look of yowre eyen tayne
Which Wikkid Speche doth fro me refrayne
As wisse hit me at lest as often loo?* 3260

Forwhi y best may say (this dar y seyne)
That all plesere y take hit of disdayne
For this, madame (ye kan not thenke hit, noo!),
When y departid last ye did me soo
Werthefully yowre look forto refrayne 3265

*As oon swete look of yowre eyen tayne
Which Wikkid Speche doth fro me refrayne
As wisse hit me at lest as often loo
As y haue thoughtis on yow, where y goo—
Of yowre fayre body and streight sidis playne.*

Ch. 209, C IX

WHo so biholdith wel as with my eye
Mi verry lady and my sul maystres, 3270
In hir he shall se a gret and hvug larges
Of <plesauce>, spryngyng from gret to more goodly.

R10

f 65v

Hir speche is such and hir demene, trewly,
That hit wol brynge any hert into gladnes,
Who so biholdith wel as with myn eye 3275
My verry lady and my sul maystres.

For yong and oold that lokith here wisly,
To preysen hir hardily they nevir cesse
But sayne echon that hit is a goddes
Which is descendid downe from heven on hy, 3280

*Who so biholdith wel as with myn eye
My verry lady and my sul maystres,*

3261–65 Because I may best say (I am sure) that I derive all my pleasure from [your] disdain, for this, madam (no, you can not believe it!), you did to me when I last left you, honorably withholding your eyes from me

3269 Whoever beholds carefully the way I do

3277 For young and old who look at her carefully

3279 but each one says that she is a goddess

*In hir he shalle se a gret and hvug larges
Of plesaunce, spryngyng from gret to more goodly.*

Ch. 209, C X

THis monthe of May, withouten pere princesse
The sovl plesere of all myn hope & thouzt,
Ye haue myn hert yn al ye may or ough, 3285
So ordeyne me a lady and maystres,

R11

f 66r

Wherfore that y biseche yowre gantiles
To take in gree this bill here to yow wrofft,
 This monthe of May, withouten pere princesse
 The sovl plesere of all myn hope & thought. 3290

And that ye lust to lesse myn hevynes,
I yow biseche that ye forslouthe it nought,
But in yowre silf that ye ben ay bithought
Sum recomfort to geue me or gladnes

This monthe of May, withouten pere princesse 3295
 The sovl plesere of all myn hope & thought,
 Ye haue myn hert yn al ye may or ough,
 So ordeyne me a lady and maystres.

Ch. 210, C XI

Comaunde me what ye will in everi wise
To me that am yowre sely, poore servaunt
And evirmore vnto yow obeyschaunt
With myn hool hert, with power and servise. 3300

R12

f 66v

I redy am in what that in me lise
Out <sparyng> this or that, y dar avaunt;
 Comaunde me what ye will in everi wise
 To me that *am yowre sely, poore servaunt.*

3291 If you wish to lessen my woe

3298 "Me" repeats "me" of the previous line.

3302 Without exempting anything . . .

Cast all consait away that doth yow grise 3305
 Asay me where that y be suffisaunt
 To doon for yow as y haue made yow graunt,
 And, if y fayle, take nevir of me prise.

Comaunde me *what ye will in everi wise*
To me that *am yowre sely, poore servaunt* 3310
And *evirmore vnto yow obeyshaunt*
With *myn hool hert, with power and servise.*
Ch. 210, C XII

JF so were that ye knowe my woo trewly, R13
 Mi verri gladdist remembraunce, f 67r
 This knowe y well withouten doutaunce:
 That ye wolde shewe vnto me sum mercy.

Allas, madame, banysshe yowre refuse (fy!) 3315
 That cowardly me holdith in penaunce.
If so were *that ye knowe my woo trewly,*
My verri *gladdist remembraunce.*

Ye graunten wolde my bone þat for [hit] cry.
 Syn that y hool am yowris in substaunce, 3320
 What vaylith yow to doon me this grevaunce?
 Whi lustith yow forto geynsay me, why?

If so were *that ye knowe my woo trewly,*
My verri *gladdist remembraunce,*
This knowe y welle withouten doutaunce:
That ye wolde shewe vnto me sum mercy.
Ch. 212, C XV

MI verri ioy and most parfit plesere, R14
 Whiche are of me and all y haue maystres, f 67v
 So willith me to se yow, lo dowltes,
 That half how moche y kan not say yow here,

for wot ye this, myn owyn lady dere:
 That without yow nave y good nor gladnes, 3330
 My verry ioy *and most parfit plesere,*
 Whiche are of *me and all y haue maystres;*

for when y werid am with Displesere,
 Whos power oft hath brought me in distres,
 Me to requere to comfort more or lesse 3335
 Nis ther, saue hope as sone to se yow here,

My verry ioy *and most parfit plesere,*
 Whiche are of *me and all y haue maystres,*
 So willith *me to se yow, lo dowtles,*
 That half *how moche y kan not say yow here,*

Ch. 213, C XVI

More then the deth nys thyng vnto me leef, R15
 Syn recomfort vnto my karfull greef f 68r
 May noon be found to ioy my woofull hert, 3340
 But, as a wrecche, avaunt y may of smert
 That wrongfully my payne is to [me] geef.

fare well, Hope, for noon may me releef!
 Thorough loue, Fortune hath cast me to myschef, 3345
 Which shapen had my deth tofore my shert.
 More then the *deth nys thyng vnto me*
 Syn recomfort *vnto my karfull greef*
 May noon ben *found to ioy my woofull hert.*

☉ God of Loue, thou wost y am no theef, 3350
 Nor falsyng of my trouthe thou kan not preef.
 Whi shall y dey, then, wolde y fayne aduert—

3335–36 there is nothing at all to summon me to comfort [i.e., to comfort me] except [my] hope to see you here soon

3339 Nothing is dearer to me than death

3342–43 . . . I may boast that my pain is given to me wrongfully

3343 “Payne repeats “smert” of previous line.

3351–53 nor can you prove [my] violation of my word. Why I must die, then, I wish to discover—although I do not care to escape from Death

Although from Deth y kepe not now astert,
Though that he stood right even here at my sleve.

More then the *deth nys thyng vnto me leef* 3355
Syn recomfort *vnto my karfull greef*
May noon ben *found to ioy my woofull hert,*
But, *as a wrecche, avaunt y may of smert*
That *wrongfully my payne is to geef.*

Ch. 213, C XVII

Goodly fayre, which y most loue and drede, R16
 In seche hape and grace as have y wonyd f 68v
 That yowre Daunger hath me enprisonyd 3360
 Longe in the bewte of yowre goodlihed,

But (welaway!) that Pite loo is deed,
 For, were she quykke, long nar y this bandonyd,
 ☉ goodly fayre, *which y most loue and drede,*
In *seche hape and grace as have y wonyd.* 3365

But and ye helpe wolde, of yowre womanhed,
 That onys y myght ben outraunsonyd,
 A shulde ben lo right well gardonyd
 If ones at large y myght bere vp myn hed,
 ☉ goodly fayre, *which y most loue and drede,* 3370
In *seche hape and grace as have y wonyd*
That *yowre daunger hath me enprisonyd*
Longe *in the bewte of yowre goodlihed.*

Ch. 214, C XVIII

3361 far from your beauty

3363 for, were she alive, I would not thus have remained a prisoner [lit: subjugated] for [such] a long time

3368-69 he [Daunger] would be handsomely rewarded [by me] if ever I could bear up my head in freedom.

Most goodly fayre, if hit were yowre plesere
 So moche forto enriche yowre servaunt here
 Of recomfort, of ioy, and of gladnes,
 I wolde biseche yow, lady and maystres,
 Not lete me dye as all in displelere,

R17

f 69r

3375

Syn that in me ther nys wele nor desere
 Saue trewly serue yow vnto my powere
 Without eschewyng payne or hevynes,
*M*ost goodly fayre, *if hit were yowre plesere*
*S*o moche forto *enriche yowre servaunt here*
*O*f recomfort *of ioy and of gladnes;*

3380

And if ye lust so doon, my lady dere,
 Ye banysshe must yowre straungely chere
 (Which is not sitting to yowre lustynes)
 And fowle Refuse, that doth me such dures—
 This is my payne; this mowe ye hele me clere,

3385

*M*ost goodly fayre, *if hit were yowre plesere*
*S*o moche forto *enriche yowre servaunt here*
*O*ff recomfort *of ioy and of gladnes,*
I wolde biseche yow, lady and maystres,
*N*ot lete me dye as alle in displelere.

3390

Ch. 211, C XIII

Refresshe the castell of my poore hert
 With sum lyvng of ioy or of plesaunce,
 For false Daunger with his allyaunce
 Asegith hit with Woo and Grevous Smert!

R18

f 69v

That it may not longe holde ye may aduert,
 Which Woo forbetith so with ordenaunce!

3395

3384–86 you must banish your distant manner (which is not fitting to your beauty) and unseemly Rejection . . .

3391–92 Resupply the castle of my wretched heart with some provisions . . .

3396 which Woe batters so with artillery!

Refreshe the *castell of my poore hert*
 With sum *lyvyng of ioy or of plesaunce.*

Not suffir him to lorde, this fals coward,
 In conqueryng vnto his obeyshaunce 3400
 Which that ye haue vndir yowre gouernaunce!
 Auaunce yow now and kepe yow lo couert!

Refreshe the *castell of my poore hert*
 With sum *lyvyng of ioy or of plesaunce,*
for false *Daunger with his allyaunce*
Asegith hit with *Woo and Grevous Smert.*

Ch. 212, C XIV

Syn Loue hath cast me banysshe euerydell 3410
 Out of his hous, for now and euymore,
 I must depart, vnto my grevous sore,
 With face delyuerid from all ioy and wele.

R19
 f 70r

This se y that y may no lengir dwelle
 Nor can aright deserven lo wherfore, 3410
Syn loue *hath cast me banysshe euerydell*
Out of *his hous for now and euermore.*

for of Comfort the wey hit fro me fell
 Thorough Mysfortune that hath me so fortore
 That my lady hath my deth yswore. 3415
 With dubbil sorow thus y entirmell,

Syn loue *hath cast me banysshe euerydell*
Out of *his hous for now and euermore,*
I must depart, *vnto my grevous sore,*
With face *delyuerid from alle ioy and wele.*

Ch. 217, C XXIII

3399–3401 do not allow him to rule . . . by winning to himself [into his authority] that which should be under your control!

3410 nor serve [you] properly therefore

AS for the gyft ye haue vnto me geve,
I thanke yow lo in all that in me is,
 Forwhi y knowe now that ye loue me this
 Which shall be quyrt to yow if so y lyue,

R20

f 70v

3420

For resoun woll hit so, this may y preue,
 For "goode doon good," wherfore, myn hertis blis,

As for the gyft ye haue vnto me geve

3425

I thanke yow lo in all that in me is.

Myn hert wol evir thynke him silf in greve
 To that desert hit ben to yow, ywis,
 Of which that long y trust ye shall not mys
 Parcas sumwhat to raunsom yow or eve

3430

As for the gyft ye haue vnto me geve

I thanke yow, lo, in all that in me is,

Forwhi y knowe now that ye loue me this

Which shalle be quyrt to yow if so y lyue.

Ch. 218, C XXIV

MAdame, as longe as hit doth plese yow ay
 To doon me lyue in þis paynfull manere,
 Myn hert is redy forto bere it here
 Without grucchyng, and shall to that y day;

R21

f 71v

3435

Only in trust yet of a bettir day
 Endewre y shall, syn hit is yowre plesere,
Madame, as longe as hit doth plese yow ay
To doon me lyue in þis paynfull manere;

3440

For onys ye woll haue pite, dar y say,
 When ye haue well bithought yow, lady dere,

3420–23 I thank you with all that is in me, because I know by this [gift] now that you love me which I shall repay you if I live so [long], for reason demonstrates . . .

3427–28 . . . in the wrong till it is repaid to you, certainly

3441 for one day you will take pity . . .

That all is for the loue y to yow bere,
That wrongfully doth holde me this away,

Madame, as *longe as hit doth plesse yow ay* 3445
To doon me *lyue in his paynfull manere,*
Myn hert is *redy forto bere it here*
Without *grucchyng, and shalle to that y day.*

Ch. 215, C XIX

Bewar! y rede yow, loke here not vpon R22
The goodly fayre that y loue feithfully! f 72r
For ye shall lese yowre hert even sodaynly
If so be that ye cast her loking on, 3450

Wherfore, but ye lust gefe yowre hert anoon,
Shette vp yowre eyen and close hem wel surely.

Bewar! y *rede yow, loke here not vpon*
The goodly *fayre that y loue feithfully,*

For the bewte she hath, bi god alon, 3455
Hit stelith lo an hert so pratily
That, but ye bet about yowre silf aspy,
Or ye be war yowre hert shall be goon.

Bewar! y *rede yow, loke here not vpon*
The goodly *fayre that y loue feithfully,* 3460
For ye *shalle lese yowre hert even sodaynly*
If so be that ye cast her loking on!

Ch. 215, C XX

Syn y may not askape me fer nor nere R23
As from the wrath of Kare and Hevynes, f 72v

3443–44 that all [I do] is for the love I bear you, [you] who thus wrongfully hold me at arm's length

3450 . . . cast a glance at her

3457–58 . . . unless you watch more carefully, before you are aware [of it] your heart will be gone

I nedis must abiden the redres
That they me geve of payne or displelere.

It to amende y haue noon ellis powere,
For Sorowe is bicomem my maystres
 Syn y may *not askape me fer nor nere*
 As from the *wrath of Kare and Hevynes.*

3465

Yet with this thought y shall my silf achere:
To pray myn hert to take it for gladnes
The <enduryng> of so gret distres,
Syn it is had for myn owen lady dere,

3470

 Syn y may *not askape me fer nor nere*
 As from the *wrath of Kare and Hevynes,*
 I nedis must abiden the redres
 That they me geve of payne or displelere.

Ch. 216, C XXI

It is doon. Ther is no more to say.
Myn hert departid is fro me
To holde with Loue and his parte,
That in bandone y lyue must to y day.

R24

f 73r

To wrethe my silf hit were me but fole,
Nor yet forto discomfort me, ma fay.

3480

It is doon. *Ther is no more to say.*
 Myn hert *departid is fro me.*

He doth not ellis but mokke with me & play
When y him say, in myn aduersite,
I may not lyue withouten him, parde,
But saith me, "Tewche!" and turneth me away.

3485

3470 "It" refers to "enduryng" in the following line.

3478 so that I must live forsaken until I die

3479-80 I would be folly to become angry or to become discouraged, certainly.

3486 but he [only] says (to me), "Tush!" and turns away from me.

Hit is doon. *Ther is no more to say.*
 Myn hert *departid is fro me*
 To holde with Loue and his parte,
 That in bandone y lyue must to y day.

Ch. 217, C XXII

R25

Had y as moche of worldly goodis
 As ther is trouthe of loue in me,
 I had therof so gret plente
 That riches shulde y neuyr mys.

f 73v

3490

Als bettir myght y gete, ywis,
 The good will lo of my lady,
 Had y as *moche of worldly goodis*
 As ther is *trouthe of loue in me,*

3495

Forwhi my trust, madame, is this:
 That yowre most plesaunt fresshe bewte
 So der I wolde arent it, shulde ye se,
 That Daungere shulde not lette me nor al his,

3500

Had y as *moche of worldly goodis*
 As ther is *trouthe of loue in me,*
 I had therof so gret plente
 That riches shulde y neuyr mys.

Ch. 218, C XXV

R26

AS for yowre prayes yn fame þat is vp bore
 Ay growyng fresshe vnto yowre gret honour,
 That is the cause y do myn hert soiowr
 With yow, to bide for now and evirmore;

f 74r

3505

3492 I would never be without wealth [i.e., I would never lack anything]
 3499–3500 I would pay such a high rent for it . . . that neither Daunger nor all his
 [cronies] could hinder me
 3503 . . . that is borne up by [your] reputation
 3505 that is why I cause my heart to lodge

But y pray yow (y shulde haue seid tofore)
 In plesaunce forto kepe him and favoure,
As for yowre prayes yn fame that is vpbore
Ay growyng fresshe vnto yowre gret honour

3510

And him in gre take as yowre servaunt sowre
 To gefe yow gift y naue of mor valowre.
 Tis my good will—hit is my hool tresowre—
 I offre yow with inward sighis sore

As for yowre prayes yn fame that is vpbore
Ay growyng fresshe vnto yowre gret honour,
That is the cause y do myn hert soiwor
With yow, to bide for now and evirmore.

3515

Ch. 219, C XXVI

IN thought, in wisshis, and in dremes soft,
 God wot how that y se yow nyght & day,
 Albe that fer am y from yow away
 Whom that y loue, as feithfully y ought.

R27

f 74v

3520

This say y me, not yow, that ye are wrought
 The most plesaunt that evir yet y say
In thought, in wisshis, and in dremes soft,
God wot how that y se yow nyght & day.

My loue is yowre, for noon except y nought
 Beseid—so thenke ye trouthe y to yow say,
 But my sovl lady are ye to y day
 Withouten choyse as of newfangill thought,

3525

In thought, in wisshis, and in dremes soft,
God wott how that y se yow nyght & day,

3530

3512 I have no gift of greater value to give you

3521–22 this [is what] I say to myself, not to you [since you are far away] that you are the most delightfully made of anyone I ever saw

3525–26 My love is yours, for I reserve none of it for anyone else—believe that I am telling you the truth

3528 without [my] choice [born] of a new fancy [for another lady]

Albe that fer am y from yow away

Whom that y loue, as feithfully y ought.

Ch. 220, C XXVII

R28

f *74r

With my trewe hert, content of ioy & wele,
Mi fayre maystres, myn hertis sovl desere,
Thenke how y serue yow, be y fer or nere,
What so me happe, in seeknes or in hele,

As redy ay to yow, in euery dele

3535

Forto fulfille yowre will, my lady dere,

With my trewe hert, content of ioy & wele,

Myn fayre maystres, myn hertis sovl desere.

Yowre presence were to me an hertis melle

With yowre honoure and to my gret plesere

3540

Whiche shulde ben lo right sone (so trust me here)

Yf hyt wer as y weche hyt sydys felle

With my trewe hert, content of ioy & wele,

Myn fayre maystres, myn hertis sovl desere,

Thenke how y serue yow, be y fer or nere,

What so me happe, in seeknes or in hele.

Ch. 220, C XXVIII

R29

f *74v

And so be now that y my purpos lesse,
Certis, y haue desert hit wil wherfore:

For well y wott y haue my silf mysbore

As toward hir that y ought most to pleser;

But what, as loo, this doth myn hert an ese:

That y haue knowen hir mercy heretofore

3550

And so be now that y my purpos lesse,

Certis, y haue desert hit wil wherfore;

3539 a meal [i.e., inspiration] to my heart

3542 if it were as I wish it [would] befall afterwards [i.e., in the future]

3545 If I fail to reach my goal, I have certainly deserved it well for this reason:

But what, y shall endure and holde my pese,
 Syn that y haue my steffen thus forswore.
 The feere y haue me grevith now so sore
 That by my lijf y sett not here a pese.

3555

*And so be now that y my purpos lesse,
 Certis, y haue desert hit wil wherfore,
 For welle y wott y haue mysilf mysbore
 As toward hir that y ought most to plese.*

Ch. 221, C XXIX

AS by the purchas of myn eyen tayne
 In servyng yow, myn hertis fayre mastres,
 I seid haue what is ioy and hevynes,
 In which y founde haue moche of thought & payne;

R30

f 75r

3560

But ioyes whiche y faynyst wolde attayne
 I kan not gete but passyng small larges,

*As bi the purchas of myn eyen tayne
 In servyng yow, myn hertis fayre mastres;*

3565

Forwhy as for oon ioyfull day, certayne,
 I leue an hundrid wekys in distres,
 But what Good Hope doth me moche gladnes
 To haue a grace as onys to be more fayne,

3570

*As bi the purchas of myn eyen tayne
 In servyng yow, myn hertis fayre mastres,
 I seid haue what is ioy and hevynes,
 In which y founde haue moche of thought & payne.*

Ch. 221, C XXX

3554 since I have renounced my right to speak

3559 Through the contrivance of my eyes

3561 I have assayed both joy and sorrow

3563-64 but of the joys that I would most like to have, I can get only an extremely small quantity

3569-70 except that Good Hope pleases me very much [by giving me the hope] to have the grace to be more contented once again

R31

f 75v

TO shewe that y haue not forgotten yow
 But redy am to serue yow, lady dere,
 This poore song y sende it to yow here,
 So takith hit in gre, y pray yow now,

3575

forwhi to dryue forth tyme, this wot ye how,
 I made it when y wisshid yow to me nere

To shewe that y *haue not forgotten yow*
But redy *am to serue yow, lady dere.*

3580

Myn hert hath yow, albe that y ne mowe,
 But God me graunt as onys to my plesere
 (What that y mene y nede not say yow here)
 To yelde me yow; y kan not make it tow

To shewe that y *haue not forgotten yow*
But redy *am to serue yow, lady dere,*
This *poore song y sende it to yow here,*
So *takith hit in gre, y pray yow now.*

3585

Ch. 222, C XXXI

R32

f 76r

fOrseek in woo and fer from ioyous hele
 Wherin all welthe doth most to on habounde,
 Myn hert, allas, y fele in sorow wounde
 Without rekeuer of comfort lo or wele,

3590

Thorugh which that y most fele, pis wot y wele,
 Of paynys grete me, caytijf, to confounde,
forseek in *woo and fer from ioyous hele*
Wherin *alle welthe doth most to me habounde.*

Thus am y falle in woo and karis fele
 Of all the greef that goth here on þe ground,

3595

3584 [God grant me the opportunity] to submit myself to you; I will not make it difficult [i.e., I will do it readily]

3587 Deathly ill on account of woe . . .

3591 on account of which I inevitably feel . . .

But syn ther can noon hele to me be found,
As maugre me, y gre must eche a dele,

*f*orseek in woo and fer from ioyous hele
Wherin alle welthe doth most to me habounde, 3600
*M*yn hert, allas, y fele in sorow wounde
*W*ithout rekeuer of comfort lo or wele.

Ch. 223, C XXXII

Right ny myn hert with[in] my bosom lo
I haue yputt a cosse of gret plesere
Which y haue stolne maugre false Daungere,
So that he dieth welnygh for verry woo;

R33

f 76v

But wherfore shulde y care as for my foo,
Though that for payne he maddid all a yere?

3605

*R*ight ny myn hert with my bosom lo
I haue yputt a cosse of gret plesere.

But and of grace hit lust my lady so
To suffre me, withouten displese,
To stele anothir, wold y go right nere
To riche me with, to y koude gedir moo.

3610

*R*ight ny myn hert with my bosom lo
I haue yputt a cosse of gret plesere
*W*hich y haue stolne maugre false Daungere,
*S*o that he dieth welnygh for verry woo.

Ch. 223, C XXXIII

If Orto biholde the bewte and manere
Of yow, myn hertis lady and maystres,
Hit is to me more verry gret gladnes
Then y kan thynke as now to say yow here

R34

f 77r

3611–12 to steal another [kiss] to make myself rich with, I would go very near
until I could gather [even] more

God wolde hit were [with] me a thousand yere,
 Forwhi therwith y lesse all hevynes 3620
*For*to benholde *the bewte and manere*
Of yow, myn hertis lady and maystres;

But for ille speche, allas, my lady dere,
 Vnnethis dar y speke of yowre goodnes,
 But oft forbere hit to my gret distres, 3625
 But alway lo to hard to me it were.

*For*to benholde *the bewte and manere*
Of yow, myn hertis lady and maystres,
Hit is to me more verry gret gladnes
Then y kan thynke as now to say yow here.

Ch. 224, C XXXIV

TAke, take this cosse atonys! atonys! my hert, 3635
 That thee presentid is of thi maystres, f 77v
 —The goodly fayre, so full of lustynes— 3630
 Only of grace to lessen with thi smert;

But to myn honoure loke thou well avert
 That Daunger not parseyue my sotilnes—
Take, take this cosse atonys! atonys! my hert, 3635
That thee presentid is of thi maystres.

Daunger wacchith al nyght in his shert
 To spye me, in a gery currisshenes,
 So to haue doon attones let se thee dresse
 While in a slepe his eyen ben covert— 3640

Take, take this cosse atonys! atonys! my hert,
That thee presentid is of thi maystres,

3619 "Hit" (as in 3617) refers back to the opening line.

3621 in beholding the beauty and bearing

3623–26 but because of evil speech (of others), . . . I hardly dare speak of your goodness, but often refrain from it [speaking well of you], to my great distress, even though it is always very hard for me [to do so]

—*The goodly fayre, so fulle of lustynes—
 Only of grace to lessen with thi smert.*
 Ch. 224, C XXXV

WHi loue y yow so moche? how may þis be?
 (And hate so moche myn hert)—þis wold y lere—
 Which recchith not to doon me displese
 Nor of my dewryng long aduersite.

R36

f 78r

3645

His harme me grevid hit small, parde,
 If that my service were to yowre plesere.

*Whi loue y yow so moche? how may this be?
 And hate so moche myn hert?—þis wold y ler.*

3650

But what, allas! allas! wel may y se
 That ye cherisse to moche with you Daungere,
 But nevertheles, myn hertis sovl desere,
 To serue yow to my last y shall ben he.

*Whi loue y yow so moche? how may this be?
 And hate so moche myn hert—þis wold y ler—
 Which recchith not to doon me displese
 Nor of my dewryng long aduersite?*

3655

Ch. 225, C XXXVI

J Prayse no thing these cossis Dowche
 Whiche geue are for a countenance
 And forto take with aqueyntaunce,
 Though many folkis loue to towche,

R37

f 78v

3660

A man may bie, out crosse or crowche,
 Ynowe of them, gret habundaunce.

3645–46 [you] who do not care if you make me miserable or of making [if you make] me endure adversity for a long time

3647–48 His pain (it) would not disturb me greatly . . . if my service were pleasing to you

3657 I do not prize these German[ic] kisses at all

I prayse no *thing these cossis Dowche*
Which geue *are for a countenaunce.*

But wot ye whiche y cherisse moche? 3665
The prive cossis of plesaunce.
Alle othir, whiche þat come askaunce,
Ben goode to feste with straungeris soche—

I prayse no *thing these cossis Dowche*
Which geue *are for a countenaunce* 3670
And forto take with aqueyntaunce,
Though many folkis loue to towche.

Ch. 225, C XXXVII

MY loue only, my ioy and my maystres, R38
Syn y may not ben longe with yow present, f 79r
With Discomfort y must ben resident
Saue oon poore hope which doth to me gladnes

That moche alightith me myn hevynes 3675
In abidyng the werre þat is me sent,
My loue only, my ioy and my maystres,
Syn y may not ben longe with yow present:

That my faynt hert, forchargid with distres, 3680
Went forth with yow anoon right as ye went
And trust of metyng nar but tyme yspent
To eft y see yowre yowthe and goodlynes

My loue only, my ioy and my maystres,
Syn y may not ben longe with yow present,
With Discomfort y must ben resident,
Saue oon poore hope which doth to me gladnes.

Ch. 226, C XXXVIII

3667 all others, which come insincerely [i.e., without genuine affection]

3681 and [my] expectation of meeting [you again] is only [a matter of] the passing of time

NAr that y drede displesen yow only,
 I passyng fayne wold stele here, verily,
 A pryvy Cosse of yow, myn hertis swete
 (Which y shall kepe full clos to eft we mete
 In tresoure of my ioy right pryvily),

R39

f 79v

So hit were there as Daunger shuld not spy
 Withouten prese of mo saue yow and y
 O fayre, which y most loue, y yow bihete,
Nar that y drede displesen yow only,
I passyng fayne wold stele here verily
A prive cosse of yow, myn hertis swete.

3690

3695

Confesse me nolde y therof to y dey,
 Forwhi y take it for no felony,
 But almes gret of yow, if so ye lete
 Me forto doon, and <als> this mow ye wete:
 The poore to fede ye do a gret mercy.

3700

Nar that y drede displesen yow only,
I passyng fayne wold stele here verily
A prive cosse of yow, myn hertis swete,
Which y shalle kepe full clos to eft we mete
In tresoure of my ioy right pryvily.

Ch. 227, C XXXIX

THe gret disese of seekfull anoyauce
 Which causith oft the penaunt sore to playne
 Here sendith yow, my lady and souerayne,
 A seeklew seek of my long grevaunce,

R40

f 80r

3705

Bi which ye may well knowe the gouernaunce

3689–90 in the treasury of my joy . . .), if it were there where Daunger would not be able to see us

3698 but as great alms from you, if you allow

3700 if you feed the poor, you show great mercy.

3706 “Penaunt” (rather than “disese”) is the subject of “sendith.”

3707 a sickly sigh of my long misery

Of Displesere that rewlith me certayne,
The gret disese *of seekfull anoyaunce* 3710
Which causith *oft the penaunt sore to playne;*

For syn yowre bewte of so gret plesaunce
 May not ben with my derkid eyen sayne,
 I lese therwith all worldly plesere playne;
 This doth me seeke, this is myn aturbaunce. 3715

The gret disese *of seekfull anoyaunce*
Which causith *oft the penaunt sore to playne*
Here sendith yow, my lady and souerayne,
A seeklew seek of my long grevaunce.

Ch. 227, C XL

IF hit plese yow yowre cossis forto selle 3720
I redy am here forto bie hem welle
 Which geue yow shall myn hert as in morgage,
 Hit to dispende as yowre owen heritage,
 Mi loue, and of plesaunce a thousand elle.

Beth not as hard with [me] to entirmelle
 As with a straunger which þat bi yow dwelle,
 That holde no lyve but of yow in homage. 3725

If hit plese yow yowre cossis forto selle
I redy am here forto bie hem welle
Which geue yow shalle myn hert as in morgage.

This bargeyne make and fy on all perell,
 Though Daunger with forsorow him forswell, 3730
 And worche weisly, though ye be yong of age,
 That y may haue a plesaunt, hool <partage>.
 Thus serue me sone or say me that ye nell:

3715 this causes me to sigh, this is my distress

3720 "Which" refers to the speaker.

3725 "That" refers to the speaker.

3729-30 Strike this bargain and disdain (say fie on) all risk, though Daunger be extremely vexed

3732 that I may have a pleasant, full share [i.e., my share]

If hit plese *yow yowre cossis forto selle*
 I redy am *here forto bie hem welle*
 Which geve *yow shalle myn hert as in morgage,*
 Sit to *dispende as yowre owen heritage,*
 Mi loue, *and of plesaunce a thousand elle.*

3735

Ch. 228, C XLI

MY loue and lady whom y most desere,
 Mi recomfort, my hertis eleccioun,
 Most goodly fayre without comparisoun,
 I sory am thus forto write yow here

R42

f 81r

3740

Forwhi to say hit were me more plesere
 Bi mouth then make this ocupacioun,
 My loue and lady, *whom y most desere,*
 My recomfort, *my hertis eleccioun.*

Alas! alas! that y nare to yow nere!
 But what, with Hope endewre y the sesoun
 Which holt me lo in this opynyoun:
 That to gladnes retorne woll my martere,

3745

My loue and lady, *whom y most desere,*
 My recomfort, *my hertis eleccioun,*
 Most goodly fayre without comparisoun,
 I sory am thus forto write yow here.

3750

Ch. 229, C XLII

Logge me, dere hert, in yowre armys tayne
 And geve me so a swete cosse two or thre,
 If it plese yow so moche to festen me
 With lovis wele, my ladi and souerayne,

R43

f 81v

3741–42 for it would give me more pleasure to speak to you in person than to labor over this letter

3746 . . . I endure this period of time [of your absence] with Hope

3748 who will turn all my suffering to happiness

3751 The lover is seen as guest; the lady's body, as a place of lodging and entertainment.

But tary that to Daunger lo be layne 3755
 To slepe and that in slumbir ye him se.

Logge me, dere hert, in yowre armys tayne
And geve me so a swete cosse two or thre,

But wake him not, bewar yow þat agayne!
 Lete him slepe—and that with yvill the! 3760
 Hit hard him is of slepe awakid be,
 But spekith soft and do hit playne:

Logge me, dere hert, in yowre armys tayne
And geve me so a swete cosse two or thre,
If it plesse yow so moche to festen me
With lovis wele, my ladi and souerayne.

Ch. 229, C XLIII

Though Daunger haue the speche biraft me here R44
 Of yow, most fayre withouten any pere, f 82r
 Thorough the purchas of cursid false Envy,
 Yet, for no thyng thei kan do verily,
 They shall not lette me loue yow, fer and nere;

For as myn hert a hath forleft me clere 3770
 To geue him silf to yow, my lady dere,
 Alwhere to serue yow to that howre he dey,
Though Daungere haue the speche biraft me here
Of yow, most fayre, withouten any pere,
Thorough the purchas of cursid false Envy. 3775

To lette him lo y kan in no manere
 But that [ther]in he tath his most plesere:

3759–60 but do not wake him, [I say] once again, avoid that! Let him sleep—and that with ill luck!

3761–62 he is not easily awakened, but speak softly [anyway] and do it at once:

3765–66 Though Daunger has robbed me of speech [i.e., the opportunity to speak] with you . . .

3769 they [the envious] shall not hinder me from loving you, [whether I am] far [from you] or near

3770 for my heart (he) has left me completely

To thanke what vertu is in yowre body,
 For though so be y se yow not with ey,
 I loue yow most, for payne or displese,

3780

*Though Daunger haue the speche biraft me here
 Of yow, most fayre withouten any pere,
 Thorough the purchas of cursid false Envy,
 Yet, for no thyng thei kan do verily,
 They shalle not lette me loue yow, fer and nere.*

Ch. 230, C XLIV

GO forth thi way, my feithfull <Deseraunce>,
 On that thou owist me thyn obeysaunce,
 Streight vnto the ioyous, fresshe manere;
 To shorte thi way also and thee to lere,
 Take to thi gide Swete Remembraunce.

R45

f 82v

3785

To serue me well y trust thi gouernaunce,
 And spede thou first thi message in substaunce
 As that knowist the well of my desere.

3790

*Go forth thi way, my feithfulle Deseraunce,
 On that thou owist me thyn obeysaunce
 Streight vnto the ioyous, fresshe Manere.*

And recomaunde me to Plesaunce,
 And sone to come if thou want puysshaunce,
 Do so that y may tidying of thee here,
 And sende hem me bi Hope, my messangere,
 And fayle me not for laboure nor penaunce.

3795

*Go forth thi way, my feithfulle Deseraunce,
 On that thou owist me thyn obeysaunce*

3800

3780 . . . in spite of any pain or misery

3785 since you owe my your obedience

3790–91 and send with haste your message . . . as one who knows the source of my desire

3796–98 and if you cannot return soon, make sure that I hear news of you and send it to me via Hope . . .

3799 . . . no matter how much labor and suffering [it causes you]

*Streight vnto the ioyous, fresshe Manere;
To shorte thi way also and thee to lere,
Take to thi gide Swete Remembraunce.*

Ch. 230, C XLV

J Put my silf vnto yowre mercy lo,
Moost goodly fayre, most replete of bounte.
Hit seid me is that ye are wroth with me;
Not wot y whi, nor where hit be or no,

R46

f 83r

3805

But all the nyght not slepen y for woo,
Saue thenke and muse wherfore þat hit shuld be.

*Y putt my silf vnto yowre mercy lo,
Moost goodly fayre, most replete of bounte.*

3810

Allas! beth not so moche to me my foo,
But yowre entent wherfore as let me se,
For this y vaunt my silf: that y am he
That kepe his trouthe and shall wherso y go.

*J putt my silf vnto yowre mercy lo,
Moost goodly fayre, most replete of bounte.
Hit seid me is that ye are wroth with me;
Not wot y whi, nor where hit be or no.*

3815

Ch. 231, C XLVI

YE are to moche as in my dette, madame,
Ye owe me, swete, to many cossis dere,
Which wold full fayne, if hit were yowr plesere,
Ye payde hem me in savyng of yowre name,

R47

f 83v

3820

So that of dette y ought yow not to blame

3805–6 it has been said to me . . . ; I don't know why, nor whether it be true or not

3812 but let me see your reason [for it]

3814 who keeps his word . . .

3819 "Which" refers to the speaker.

Which dar not don, me thenke, hit for daungere.

Ye are to moche as in my dette, madame,

Ye owe me, swete, to many cossis dere.

Wite ye, y haue a writ out for þe same
To tache yow with! y rede yow pay hem here,
Lest ye be restid with an officere
Of Loue! Fy! fy! hit were to gret a shame!

3825

Ye are to moche as in my dette, madame,

Ye owe me, swete, to many cossis dere,

Which wold fulle fayne, if hit were yowr plesere,

Ye payde hem me in savyng of yowre name.

3830

Ch. 232, C XLVII

Yowre mouth hit saith me, "Bas me, bas [me], swet!"
When that y yow bihold, this semeth me,
But Daunger stant so nygh hit may not be,
Which doth me sorow gret, y yow bihet,

R48

f 84r

But bi yowre trowth, gefe me hit, now we mete,
A pryve swet, swete cosse two or thre.

3835

Yowre mouth hit saith me, "Bas me, bas me, swet!"

When that y yow bihold, this semeth me.

Daunger me hatith (whi y kan not wet)
And labourith ay my gret aduersite.
God graunt me onys forbrent y may him se
That y myght stampe his assis with my feet!

3840

Yowre mouth hit saith me, "Bas me, bas me, swet!"

When that y yow bihold, this semeth me.

But Daunger stant so nygh hit may not be,

Which doth me sorow gret, y yow bihet.

Ch. 232, C XLVIII

Not oft y prayse, but blame, as in substaunce,
 All the welthe of lovis paynful blis,
 For euery ioy with woo enmeyntid is
 Of gret foysoun of frawde and false semblaunce.

R49
 f 84v

The wele and woo of hit doth rolle & daunce
 As shippe in see for tempest that veris.
Not oft y prayse, but blame, as in substaunce,
All the welth of lovis paynful blis.

3850

This is the cause y make such resemblaunce:
 For as the shippe forpossid is this and this,
 Right so of loue the hertis arne, ywis,
 As now in wele and now in gret penaunce.

3855

Not oft y prayse, but blame, as in substaunce,
All the welth of lovis paynful blis,
For euery ioy with woo enmeyntid is
Of gret foysoun of frawde and false semblaunce.

Ch. 233, C XLIX

AT nede <thy> frendis preven what bei be
 In eche a werk as stondith matere;
 This say y lo by yow, my lady dere,
 For at my nede ye haue not faylid me,

R50
 f 85r
 3860

But holpe me loo and that so moche, parde,
 That hit contentith all myn own desere.

At nede the frendis preven what bei be
In eche a werk as stondith matere.

3865

But welaway! departen now must we!
 But though it greve yow, bere a gladsom chere,
 For leyser more y want to write yow here,
 Saue: Ihesu graunt agayne vs sone to se.

3870

3845 I ought not to praise, but to criticize . . .

3850 as a ship that keeps changing direction in a storm

3863 but have helped me . . .

3870 except [to write]: Jesus grant that we see each other again soon

At nede the *frendis preuen what þei be*
 In eche a *werk as stonðith matere.*
 This say y lo by yow, my lady dere,
 For at my nede ye haue not faylid me.

Ch. 233, C L

FLeth the shott of Swete Regard,
 Myn hert, without thou willist forto day,
 Which nakid art of wepene and aray,
 For witty flight is signe of no coward!

R51

f 85v

3875

Abide and thou art tan, maugre thi berd,
 Without thou cast thee vnto Loue abay!
 Fleth the *shott of Swete Regard,*
 Myn hert, *without thou willist forto day!*

3880

Wherfore withdrawith the standard
 As of no forse as sone as that thou may;
 And Plesaunce do thee yelde, þis is to say,
 Thou art but deed, allas, y am aferd!

Fleth the *shott of Swete Regard,*
 Myn hert, *without thou willist forto day,*
 Which nakid art of wepene and aray,
 For witty flight is signe of no coward!

3885

Ch. 234, C LI

MY wele, my ioy, my loue, and my lady,
 Which y most loue and shall wher þat y go,
 I pray yow to be glad, not sory, lo,
 In trust that y shall se yow hastily,

R52

f 86r

3890

For y not bidde but seche a tyme trewly

3877–78 Stay and you will be taken prisoner, in spite of all you can do, unless you intend to obey Love's commands!

3883 if Pleasure causes you to surrender . . .

3891 for I do not [just] pray [i.e., wish] for it, but [actively] seek . . .

To come to yow, so wis God helpe me so,
My wele, my ioy, my loue, and my lady,
Which y most loue and shall wher þat y go.

For and so were bi wisshis swete þat y 3895
 Might ben with yow a day or two or mo,
 Of all ricches that in this world is lo
 As had y alle my wisshis, verily,

My wele, my ioy, my loue, and my lady,
Which y most loue and shall wher þat y go, 3900
I pray yow to be glad, not sory, lo,
In trust that y shalle se yow hastily.

Ch. 235, LII

A Pak, a pak—madame, my lode alight, R53
 Forwhi, allas! y bere to hevy, lo, f 86v
 And without yow I may no ferthir go,
 So helpe me sett my crokid burthen right,

Or ellis ye are to blame, bi God almyght, 3905
 For me my silf wolde helpe yow, bare ye so.
A pak, a pak—madame, my lode alight,
Forwhi, alas! y bere to hevy, lo.

Ther is no mo to calle now here in sight, 3910
 So helpe—or ellis attonys bicomme my foo!
 Now mercy, swete! but will ye, lo, or noo
 Haue pite now vpon me, poore wight?

A pak, a pak—madame, my lode alight,
Forwhi, alas! y bere to hevy, lo,
And without yow I may no ferthir go,
So helpe me sett my crokid burthen right.

No French for remaining roundels

3897 of all the good things in this world
 3902 for . . . I bear too heavy [? a load] . . . [see note]
 3906 . . . if you bore such a load

THe mede is flowe, the grace is goon,
 The hert is chaungid from his place.
 Where y had wende hem be, he nas.
 Thus Myrthe and y are comen foon.

R54
 f 87r

But fy, allas! that a wise oon
 Shulde "Hay!" or thay se what to chas.
 The mede is *flowe, the grace is goon,*
 The hert is *chaungid from his place.*

3920

Yet trust y lo to fynde aloon
 An hert, if that y haue the grace,
 And if y onys may that purchase,
 Then "hay" on hardely euerichoon!

3925

*The meede is flowe, the grace is goon,
 The hert is chaungid from his place.
 Where y had wende hem be, he nas.
 Thus Myrthe and y are comen foon.*

ALadies hert forto want pite,
 Hit is to fowle [a sin] ageyne nature,
 That in so benygne a figure,
 So bewtevous fayre in eche feture,
 Which lakkith ellis vertu nor bounte.

R55
 f 87v
 3930

For what entent shuld she formyd be
 Without hit were to mordre suche as me
 That loven <her> aboue eche creature?

3935

*A ladies hert forto want pite,
 Hit is to fowle a sin ageyne nature,
 That in so benygne a figure,
 A ladies hert forto want pite.*

3940

3919–20 but fie, allas, that a man of sound judgment should [urge on his hunting dogs with] Hay! before they spot the quarry.

3929–33 It is too foul [a sin] against nature that the heart of a lady so gracious, so very fair in every way, who otherwise lacks neither virtue nor generosity should lack pity

I kan no more; but what, y must agre
 Mi silven with my fatall aventure,
 Syn that it is my destyne and vre
 That all my lijf in payne y must endure
 And to biwayle the tyme y evir se.

3945

A ladies hert *forto want pite,*
Hit is to *fowle a sin ageyne nature,*
That in so *benygne a figure,*
A ladies hert *forto want pite.*

R56

G Fayre madame, Crist wold ye knew my payne,
 With all my thought and bisy remembraunce
 Which my poore hert hath in governaunce
 For loue of yow, and thorough yowre hard suffraunce
 No reward founde, for ought þat y complayne.

f 88r

I kan not say but well ye mowe disdayne
 Mi loue, that am so poore a wrecche, certayne,
 But so it were to yow no displesaunce,

3955

© fayre madame, *Crist wold ye knew my payne,*
 With all my *thought and bisy remembraunce*
 Which my poore *hert hath in governaunce.*

3960

Yowre mercy, swete, me lever were attayne
 Then all this worldis goodis habundaunce,
 And also, wisly Ihesu me avaunce,
 —Or that y deye—to sum part of plesaunce
 And as he wot that y did nevir fayne.

3965

© fayre madame, *Crist wold ye knew my payne,*
 With all my *thought and bisy remembraunce*
 Which my poore *hert hath in governaunce*

3954 "founde" is parallel to "hath" in 3952.

3955 I can not say anything except that you may well disdain

3957 but if it were to [i.e., caused] you no annoyance

3962 than all this world's abundance of goods

3965 "And" is redundant.

*f*or loue of yow, and thorough yowre hard suffraunce
 No reward founde, for ought þat y complayne.

MY gostly fadir, y me confesse
 First to God and then to yow
 That at a wyndow, wot ye how,
 I stale a cosse of gret swetnes,

R57

f 88v
3970

Which don was out avisynes,
 But hit is doon not vndoon now.

*M*y gostly fadir, y me confesse,
 First to God and then to yow.

3975

But y restore it shall, dowltes
 Ageyn, if so be that y mow
 And that [to] God y make a vow,
 And ellis y axe foryefnes.

3980

*M*y gostly fadir, y me confesse,
 First to God and then to yow,
 That at a wyndow, wot ye how,
 I stale a cosse of gret swetnes.

MAdame, y wold, bi God alone,
 How that myn hert were in yowre sleue,
 For in good trouth ye wol not leue
 How fayne he wolde fro me bigoon.

R58

f 89r
3985

So, good, take it now anoon,
 For frely him y to yow geue.

*M*adame, y wold, bi God alone,
 How that myn hert were in yowre sleue.

3990

3973 which was done without premeditation

3979 and *that* I vow to god

3983–84 Madam, I wish . . . by whatever means my heart were in your sleeve

3987 The heart is “it” in this line but “him” throughout the rest of the poem.

For he and y are comen foon.
 A doth to me so gret a greef
 That, but ye lust me to myschef,
 So take him or sle me, the toon.

Madame, y wold, bi God alone, 3995
How that myn hert were in yowre sleue,
For in good trouth ye wol not leue
How fayne he wolde fro me bigoon.

God, so as hit enioyeth me
 Forto bithynke my ladies goodlihed,
 Hir high parage and sewrid womanhed,
 Vertu, iantiles, honure, & bounte

R59

f 89v

4000

Hir lusty yowthe, hir fasson and bewte,
 And plesaunt lookis so avisily spred,

God, so as hit enioyeth me
 Forto bethynke my ladies goodlihed.

But hir to loue it is gret drede
 So voyd, allas! hir hert is of pite
 That, or on to grace amyttid be,
 Antropos wol breke hir thred.

4005

God, so as hit enioyeth me
 Forto bethynke my ladies goodlihed,
 Hir high parage and sewrid womanhed,
 Vertu, iantiles, honure, & bounte.

4010

Fare wel, fare wel, my lady and maystres!
 Fare wel, þat y most loue and evir shall!
 Fare wel, allas, hit shulde me thus bifall!
 Fare wel, the hope of my ioy and gladnes!

R60

f 90r

3994 . . . one or the other

4007–8 that, before (any)one is admitted into her favor, Antropos will break their [i.e., his] thread

4013 . . . alas, that it should befall me thus

Not may y speke for payne and hevynes 4015
 And yowre departyng is þe cause of all.

fare wel, fare wel, my lady and maystres;
fare wel, þat y most loue and evir shall!

For vnto Waylyng, Wepying, and Distres, 4020
 From this tyme forth bicomen must y thral,
 Syn that y may not stroke þe sidis smal
 Of yowre swete body, ful of lustynes.

fare wel, fare wel, my lady and maystres;
fare wel, þat y most loue and evir shall!
fare wel, allas, hit shulde me thus bifall!
fare wel, the hope of my ioy and gladnes!

No French, see note

Q Fayre madame, no more vnto me write, R61
 For such wrytyng hit causith but dilayes f 90v
 That drivith tyme in dryffte from day to dayes,
 But do the effecte, then ar ye not to wyte,

For othir thing hit vaylith not a myte
 Vnto myn hert, in sorow which þat dayes 4030
 ☉ *fayre madame, no more vnto me write,*
for suche wrytyng hit causith but dilayes.

Ye shewe therbi vnkyndenes a lite,
 If so were that y durste say [. . .]
 Fy! ferful hert þat sechis alle ther wayes 4035
 In vayne, only yowre servaunt to respite.

☉ *fayre madame, no more vnto me write,*
for suche wrytyng hit causith but dilayes
That drivith tyme in dryffte from day to dayes,
But do the effecte, then ar ye not to wyte.

4027–29 that causes time to pass in its course from day to day, but [if you] perform the purport [of the letter], then you are not to blame, for the other thing [i.e., writing letters] avails not a bit

THis tyme when louers alpermost defie
 Eche hevy thought as ferforth as þei may
 And rise or Phebus in þe morow gray,
 Leiying aside all slouthe and slogardy

R62

f 91r

4040

To here the birdis synge so lustily
 Ouyr þe spryngyng bodies on þe spray,
This tyme when louers alpermost defie
Eche hevy thought as ferforth as þei may,

4045

Thyn waylyng on my pilow thus y ly
 For þat as was and now is goon for ay,
 Wisshyng no more but deth eche howre of day,
 Saiyng, "Myn hert, allas! whi nelt þou day?"

4050

This tyme when louers alpermost defie
Eche hevy thought as ferforth as þei may
And rise or Phebus in þe morow gray,
Leiying aside alle slouthe and slogardy.

R63

f 91v

4055

More speche, madame, is of yowre goodlynes
 Then of Aleyne or yet Penolope,
 For all þe world hit preysith yowre bewte—
 Not that alone, but eek yowre Iantillesse,

That, on my trouthe, hit is my gret gladnes
To thinke how fele þat lust vpon hit se,—
More speche, madame, is of your goodlynes
Then of Aleyne or yet Penolope,—

4060

Me saiyng, "Whens cometh she?" "As y gesse,
 From hevene," say y, "hit kan noon othir be."

4041 and rise before the sun in the grey dawn

4044 above the bursting buds on the twigs

4047-48 Then I lie thus on my pillow wailing for that which was . . .

4057-58 so that . . . it is my great happiness to think how many [there are] who wish to look on it [your beauty]

4061 saying to me, "Where does she come from?" . . .

“Certis,” thei seyne, “so semen we,
For wel she semeth a goddesse.”

*More speche, madame, is of your goodlynes
Then of Aleyne or yet Penolope,
For alle þe world hit preysith yowre bewte—
Not that alone, but eek yowre iantillesse.*

4065

All desolat from ioy or hertis hele,
I yow biseche, or þat y to yow write,
That what y say ye take in no dispite,
Syn nede me nedith euery dele;

R64

f 92r

4070

So vnportable are my paynes fele
That, but y speke, y am my deth to wite,
*All desolat from ioy or hertis hele,
I yow <biseche>, or þat y to yow write.*

Thus lengir, swete, y may not from yow hele—
I loue yow lo and þat is not a lite,
For it is more þen y dare yow endite,
So haue mercy in payne with which y dele,

4075

*All desolat from ioy or hertis hele,
I yow biseche, or þat y to yow write,
That what y say ye take in no dispite,
Syn nede me nedith euery dele.*

4080

God, of thi grace, the good sowle now pardon
Of hir that was my maystres & norice,
Forwhi at lest she wolde me lappe and kis
Where noon are now þat lust so forto doon.

R65

f 92v

4070 since need harasses me in every part

4072 that, unless I speak, I must die

4078 so have mercy on the pain . . .

4084 whereas now there are none who wish to do so

Me thynk y ledde a lijf lijk to þe mone: 4085
 Now full, now wane, now round, now chaungid þis—
God, of thi grace, the good sowle now pardon
Of hir þat was my maystres & norice—

Now wel, now woo, in liche wise þus y wone.
 Wo for hir deth and hope my wele it is 4090
 Sone forto mete with hir in heven blis;
 So, myghti Lord, þou here my karful bone:

God of þi grace, the good sowle now pardon
Of hir þat was my maystres & norice,
Forwhi at lest she wolde me lappe and kis
Where noon are now þat lust so forto doon.

Wherfore, wherfore make ye þre naves? whi? R66
 Me thynke þei nede not spoken ben so oft f 93r
 If in yowre silf þat ye were wele bithought.
 What cause se ye to say nay? fy! fy! fy!

Remembre yow also, am y not y
 That dare not doon but as ye han me taught? 4100
Wherfore, wherfore make ye þre naves whi?
Me thynke þei nede not spoken ben so oft,

For and so be þat y do vngoodly
 As aftirmore then loke ye loue me nou3t
 And levir nad y ben to lijf ywrou3t 4105
 But rathir lo þis selven houre to die!

Wherfore, wherfore make ye þre naves whi?
Me thynke þey nede not spoken ben so oft
If in yowre silf þat ye were wele bithought.
What cause se ye to say nay? fy! fy! fy!

4086 now full, now waning, now new, now waxing

4089 now in weal, now in woe, I live thus like [the moon]

4097 if you thought about it seriously

4099–100 . . . am I not the one who dare not behave . . .

When me bithought is of my ladi dere,
 The bewte, shappe, and goodli gouernaunce,
 Hit doth for ioy myn hert to synge and daunce
 That even a blisse me thynke is him to here.

R67

f 93v

4110

So wondir nyse þou3 þat the self plesere
 Me bynden hool vnto hir ordenaunce,

When me bithought is of my ladi dere
The bewte, shappe, and goodli gouernaunce;

4115

But forto thynke y am not to hir nere,
 Hit doth myn hert to die in displesaunce
 That vnto me ther nys so gret penaunce—
 Thus wel, now woo, myn hert doth me achere

4120

When me bithought is of my ladi dere
The bewte, shappe, and goodli gouernaunce,
Hit doth for ioy myn hert to synge and daunce
That even a blisse me thynke is him to here.

A, Well! myn hert, but wol ye not ben wise?
 Bi verry God, y drede ye will aby
 If that ye pursew moche my rakil ey
 To don vs bothe to smert yowre towchis nyse.

R68

f 94r

4125

What shulde ye chepe a thing of suche a prise,
 That are not worth þe thousand part, to by?

A wel, myn hert, but wol ye not ben wise?
By verry God, y drede ye wille aby.

4130

Remembre yow þe charge þat on hit lise,
 For, were it oure, yet are we not worthi

4112–13 so that it is a joy . . . to hear him. So is it no wonder that the same pleasure

4120 thus my heart brings me to feel now weal, now woe

4126 to cause us both to suffer from your foolish behavior

4127–28 Why should you, who are not worth the thousandth part [of her], bargain in order to [try to] buy a thing [the lady's favor] of such value?

Hit to possede. Be ware ye now foly!
I kan no more; y haue yow warnyd twise.

A wel, myn hert, but wol ye not ben wise? 4135
By verry God, y drede ye wille aby
If that ye pursew moche my rakil ey
To don vs bothe to smert yowre towchis nyse.

R69

f 94v

THe smylyng mouth and laughyng eyen gray,
The brestis rounde, and long, smal armys twayne,
The hondis smope, þe sidis streiȝt & playne,
Yowre fetis lite, what shulde y ferþer say? 4140

Hit is my craft, when ye are fer away,
To muse þeron, in styntyng of my payne—
The smylyng mouth and laughyng eyen gray,
The brestis rounde and long, smal armys twayne.

So wolde y pray yow, gef y durste or may, 4145
The sight to se as y haue seyne,
Forwhi þat craft me is most fayne
And wol ben to þe howre in which y day:

The smylyng mouth and laughyng eyen gray
The brestis rounde and long smal armys twayne, 4150
The hondis smope, þe sidis streiȝt & playne,
Yowre fetis lite, what shulde y ferþer say?

R70

f 95r

WFy, Loue, fy! amende yowre gouernaunce!
Ye are to townyssh, bi this book
(Who so þat good hede on yow took),
To doon on haue of hit plesaunce.

4132–33 for, were it ours, yet we are not worthy to possess it . . .

4146 to see the sight such as I have seen [i.e., to see you as I have seen you before]

4154 to give one [i.e., me] any pleasure at your behavior

What wise ye suche lewde knakkis askaunce 4155
 On on al day to gase and loke?

☉ fy, Loue, fy! *amende yowre gouernaunce!*
 Ye are to townyssh, bi this book.

When seson is so lete hem glaunce 4160
 And ellis not onys in all a woke;
 Bimase, y felt myn hert aquok
 Of þi foltisshe acqueyntaunce.

☉ fy, Loue, fy! *amende yowre gouernaunce!*
 Ye are to townyssh, bi this book.
 Who so þat good hede on yow took
 To doon on haue of hit plesaunce.

A, Lo, myn hert, what tolde y the? R71
 —And thou seide, “Twissh, let me alone!”— f 95v
 That if she louyd anothir one
 For all þi craft hit wolde not be.

What, wolde thou thynke suche on as she 4170
 That thei wolde be wonne anoon?

A, lo, myn hert, *what tolde y the?*
 And þou seide, “Twissh, let me alone!”

To holde þi foly, now let se, 4175
 Syn all good Hope is fro þe goon,
 And make in thee a priuy moon
 That pite lakkith in Bewte.

A, lo, myn hert, *what tolde y the?*—
 And thou seide, “Twissh, let me alone!”—
 That if she louyd anothir one
 For alle þi craft hit wolde not be.

4155–56 What leads you [to play] such uncourtly tricks [as] to peer and pry at someone all day?

4160–62 and otherwise not once in a whole week; stunned, I felt my heart tremble because of your ill-advised companionship.

4168–70 . . . you could not succeed. What, would you think such a one as she would be won immediately?

quire missing

THou shalt no more rewle me, my hert. R87
 I wol no more be to thee thral, f 96r
 To folow thee, thi bostis al, 4180
 That feele therin so gret a smert;

Thou makist me to nyse and pert
 So oft for thi mercy to cal.
 Thou shalt *no more rewle me, my hert.* 4185
 I wol no *more be to thee thral.*

For reson may þis wel avert:
 That, were þi servise worth at al,
 Sum grace or this had to the fal,
 If any payne hit myght desert! 4190

Thou shalt *no more rewle me, my hert.*
 I wol no *more be to thee thral,*
 To folow thee, thi bostis al,
 That feele therin so gret a smert.

BE nyse, myn hert, as purse is of an ay, R88
 And y shal loke þat no man come þe while. f 96v
 Ye must be betyne, bi Seynt Gyle, 4195
 To titill fitill thus alday!

Thenke ye hit is a fayre aray,
 As now to wepe and eft to smyle?
 Be nyse, *myn hert, as purse is of an ay,*
 And y shal loke þat no man come þe while. 4200

May not suffise yow lo <a nay>?
 Be ware or Hope do yow bigyle.

4182 "That" refers to the speaker.

4193-94 Be as smooth . . . as the shell of an egg [i.e., compose yourself], and I will watch [out] that no one comes by while you do it

4202 beware lest Hope beguile you

Suche raggid thoughtis from yow fil,
Or ye are lost—this dare y say—

Be nyse, *myn hert, as purse is of an ay,* 4205
And y shal loke þat no man come þe while.
Ye must be betyne, bi Seynt Gyle,
To titill fitill thus alday!

Ⓞ Fayre madame, allpough þat þer be noon 889
That for him silf kan speke so yvil as y, f 97r
Yet neuyrtheles but ye had cause of whi
Make me not lest of euery othir on, 4210

And, al be þat y make a rewdisse mon,
Bithynk my trouthe; lete me not dy,
Ⓞ fayre madame, *allpough þat þer be noon*
That for *him silf kan speke so yvil as y!*

for voyde stonde y of hope saue yow alon, 4215
Of whiche me seme ye sett but lital by.
Alas! þe deth gef þat y ben worthi,
Then do me so þat y were goon

Ⓞ fayre madame, *allpough þat þer be noon*
That for *him silf kan speke so yvil as y,* 4220
Yet neuyrtheles but ye had cause of whi
Make me not lest of euery othir on.

Almes yowre mercy me, my swete, 890
And make me yowre bedeman, f 97v
For, were yowre grace me gyven, þan
I were to riche a man to wete.

4208–10 who can speak for himself so unskillfully, yet . . . ?unless you had a reason for it, do not rank me lowest [in your estimation]

4216–18 by which fact . . . you set little store. . . if I am worthy of death, then kill me.

4221 Give your mercy as almes to me, my sweet

4224–26 then I would be too rich a man indeed. It is hard for him . . . to beg in your presence who never did [it] before.

It is him hard, y yow bihete,
To begge tofore that nevir gan. 4225

Almesse yowre mercy me, my swete
And make me yowre bedeman,

for when now <as> with Hope y met,
I am so poore, he, seek and wan, 4230
That for noon helpe that y hem kan
I may not kepe him on his feet.

Almesse yowre mercy me, my swete
And make me yowre bedeman,
*f*or, were yowre grace me gyven, þan
I were to riche aman to wete.

Wel, wanton ey, but must ye nedis pley? 4235
Yowre lokis nyse, ye let hem renne to wide.
I drede me sore if þat ye ben aspide,
And þen we must hit bothe right dere abey!

R91
f 98r

Take sum and leue sum to anothir day,
And, for oure ese, swift from yowre theftis glide. 4240
Wel, wanton ey, but must ye nedis pley?
Yowre lookis nyse, ye let hem renne to wide.

for myght onys Sklaundir gete yow vndir key,
Ye shulde ben then from alle suche þeftis tide;
So fy, for shame! lete Reson be yowre gide 4245
(And stele—spare not—when ye se tyme and may!)

Wel, wanton ey, but must ye nedis pley?
Yowre lokis nyse, ye let hem renne to wide.
I drede me sore if þat ye ben aspide,
And þen we must hit bothe right dere abey!

4230–32 I am so wretched, he [is] so sick and pale, that for no help I can give him can I . . .

AS he that no thing may profite,
 What do y now but wayle and crie
 As for myn howre in which to die,
 Not setting bi my lijf a myte?

R92

f 98v
4250

And of all þis, who is to wite?
 Not dare y sey, no, no, trewly.

As he þat *no thing may profite,*
 What do y *now but wayle and crie?*

4255

So nys hit wondir but a lite
 Though that y go ful drepyngly
 And drawe me sol from company
 Til dethis dart lust on me smyte.

4260

As he þat *no thing may profite,*
 What do y *now but wayle and crie*
As for myn howre in which to die,
 Not setting bi my lijf a myte?

MYn hert, thou fondis[t] bi this light,
 To fle from Lovis company.
 It kan not be, O fool, fy! fy!
 Thou hast therto, parde, no myght.

R93

f 99r

4265

Hath not Fortune þe bihight
 To ben his servaunt to thou dey?
Myn hert, *thou fondist bi this light*
To fle from *Lovis company!*

4270

Stryue not with him, y rede, nor fight,
 Lest þou þe sorer hit aby,
 But meekly þou his mercy cry
 Of þat þou wolde haue tane a flight.

4252 not caring for my life a jot?

4257 So it is no wonder

Myn hert, *thou fondist bi this light* 4275
To fle from *Lovis company!*
It kan not be, *O fool, fy! fy!*
Thou hast *therto, parde, no myght.*

Svm tyme y was a poore serviture R94
 In Louys court and had a gouernaunce, f 99v
 To crewel Fortune, ful of disseyvaunce,
 Dischargid me of my good aventure, 4280

And pe ricches þat y had vndir cure
 Bitook it hoole to Dethis ordinaunce,—
Svm tyme y was a poore serviture
In Loueys court and had a gouernaunce.—

And bad me walke, an ofcast creature, 4285
 On the wilde desert of Desperaunce,
 Where now y dwelle in turment and penaunce
 And must vnto y dey, this am y sewre.

Svm tyme y was a poore serviture
In Loueys court and had a gouernaunce, 4290
To crewel Fortune, ful of disseyvaunce,
Dischargid me of my good aventure.
seven blank pages follow

Blesse, oblesse—que porrar obler R102
 All heuy thought þat bryngith in distres, f 102v
 For, so forcast am y in hevynes,
 That, though y wolde, y may in no manere,

4277 Once I was a lowly servant
 4279–80 till cruel Fortune . . . deprived me of my good fortune
 4281 and the riches [i.e., the lady] . . .
 4291 Forgetfulness, forgetfulness—that I might forget
 4294 . . . I may not [forget] at all

Syn that—allas, myn hertis lady dere!—
The Deth hath slayne hir of his cursidnes.

4295

Oblesse oblesse que porrar obler
All heuy thouzt þat bryngith in distres.

For though þat y ybeddid had my bere,
Full litill hurt it were to yow, y gesse,
But what, y pray yow þat yowre gentiles
Lust to agre yow with my poore chere.

4300

Oblesse oblesse que porrar obler
All heuy thouzt þat bryngith in distres,
*f*or, so forcast am y in hevynes,
That, though y wolde, y may in no manere.

R103

NOr> Ipocras nor yet Galien
Ne may of me the woofull woundis cure,
But Ihesu graunt yow bettir aventure!
Now take yowre Cup and saith of yowre wyn.

f 103r

Iwold, a trouthe, that hit were for yow fyn,
But trobly thought hath made it all vnpure,
*f*or Ipocras nor yet Galien
Ne may of me the woofulle woundis cure.

4310

But what, the lesse [hit] doth me lo forpyn
That hit lust yow do me this honure,
So haue ye wonne me for yowre serviture
Vnto the deth hath closid vp myn eyne,

4315

*f*or Ipocras nor yet Galien
Ne may of me the woofulle woundis cure,
*B*ut Ihesu graunt yow bettir aventure!
Now take yowre Cup and saith of yowre wyn.

4302 be pleased to approve of my frame of mind

4308 now take up your cup(s) and taste your wine

4313–14 ... it torments me less [i.e., relieves my pain] that it pleases you to honor me [by being my guests]

Were y a clerk, then wold y say yow grace, f 103v
 But certis then, ageynward, am y noon, 4320
 For what y haue the God of Loue he hase
 Isend it me and ellis no master noon.
 I gesse y lerid it well, but yt ys gon;
 But nevirtheles as y kan for yow say,
 The God of Loue (the myghtty god!) I pray 4325

To vre yow so in trouthe to lede yowre lijf,
 Withouten fraude or dowbill countenaunce
 But <feode> yow ay, owt ielowsy or strijf
 In lust and wele vnto yowre gret plesaunce,
 And that yowre ladies, whiche han suffisaunce 4330
 Of all bewte, vnto yowre avise,
 Beth not to hard in swete of yowre enpresse,

For, trouthe, in loue who secreet is and wise, f 104r
 Owt shewith not in word nor countenaunce
 On wanton look, nor yet no tacchis nise, 4335
 As thorgh the which vnbridelid governaunce
 That folke shuld thenke: ther goth such on askaunce
 Bi his devise or yet bi browderure
 To make an ennysen a coverture,

As in oon thing not O name, two or thre 4340
 Thorough which þat any wight shulde þynk or grope:
 "Lo, yondir toy hit is for me—or she!"

4121–23 for what I have [i.e., what I know] the God of Love, and no other master, has sent (it) to me [i.e., taught me]. I think I learned it [what he taught me] well, but it is gone [now I have forgotten it]

4330–32 and [I pray] that your ladies, which have an abundance of beauty, in your judgments, be not too hard [to obtain, i.e., resistant] in [your] pursuit of your difficult enterprise

4335–39 one amorous glance, nor bad qualities such as through uncontrolled behavior, would make people think: there goes someone [who acts] deceptively, [as if] by his coat of arms [i.e., his high status] or by an embroidery [on it he could] use his emblem [i.e., his nobility] as a disguise [for his truly base nature]. 4340–42 as if for one thing [there were] not one name, [but] two or three, through which [fact] anyone might think "Lo, *that* lady is for me—or *that* one!"

And all in vayne to doon hem so to hope
 (Which is þe craft to make a keverkope
 To holde a two or thre so on his sleue), 4345
 —But God of Loue yow blesse from þat myschefe!

That eche in oon ye take yowre suffisaunce,
 Yowre ioy, yowre wele, and all yowre hool comfort
 To ben as here yowre worldly <lo> plesaunce,
 For vnto loue suffisith oon resort; 4350
 If hit not doo to yow, y me report,
 A fawt ther is in oon of hem tayne,—
 But most it happith man (y am but playne!),

But then agayne, the trouthe of <loue is> soche
 That how it falle him, payne or hevynes, 4355
 Yet wol it doon hem (all right wel avoche)
 Forto contynew forth in stedfastnes
 Rathir then ben taynt in dowbilnes,
 For ner not Trouth, Loue hath no champioun
 To holden vp his prays of gret renowne. f 104v

As in the contre of his hertis chest
 He weyeth alle his deedis to mesure
 How God of Loue may be seruid best
 And onaspide of any creature.
 This is of Trouthe the verry werkis pure, 4365
 The which that bi ensewrid governaunce
 Hath all his werk in forcast ordenaunce,

So that him, thourgh no foltisshe, foly myshappe,
 Ther ben a cause ygen to any wight,
 Bi which they shulde any dishonure clappe; 4370

4343 “Hem” refers to the ladies; “to doon” is parallel with “to make” (4339).
 4347 So that each of you take your satisfaction in [only] one [lady]
 4351–53 if it does not suffice, I assert, there is a fault in one of the two lovers, but
 most often it befalls [i.e., is the fault of] the man . . .
 4360 to uphold his praise or great renown.
 4364 and [how to do it and remain] unseen
 4368–70 so that there be no cause given to anyone, through ill-advised, foolish
 bad luck, by which they could speak lightly of any dishonor to [i.e., of] him

To ianglyn this or that is not aright.
 He berith in him so sotill an insight,
 That passyng hard hit is such on asprien
 Though hit were Argus with his hundrid eyene.

But though this craft wol not be lernyd sone 4375
 And be full hard to suche as wanten brayne,
 Yet fervent loue kan cause it to be doon
 When onys are ioynyd hertis tayne,
 But then the false that doon but fayne—
 They bred are in so rewde a leyre 4380
 They rekke not who speke fowl or fayre.

So from all this he yow defende
 Thorough whom all grace is geue to loue,
 And alle that mys han doon, amende,
 And, as that y haue seid aboue, 4385
 So graunt yow grace to yowre bihoue, f 105r
 As wel forto acheven yowre emprise
 And at yowre ende, the blisse of paradise.
No French

§

Now will ye lordis wessehe or shall y wessehe,
 If so to doon hit be to yowre plesere? 4390
 And yet, a trouthe, ther nys her no, no disshe
 That, as me thynkith, ought fowle yowre hondis here
 Wherefore that this insted of watir clere,
 Bicause y haue of wisshis habundaunce,
 This shall y wissehe, if hit be yowre plesaunce: 4395

Ne were hit no that y in wisshis nysse
 Delite my silf, not koude y lyvyn this.
 So gret it is, the payne that on me lise

4373 that it is extremely hard to see [that] such a one [is a lover at all]

4391–92 . . . there is no dish here [that you have eaten] that . . . would sully your hands [i.e., it is not necessary to wash]

4396–97 were it not that I take delight in foolish (amorous) wishes . . .

That in this world no karfull wrecche þer nys
 Which lyvith lo so fer from hertis blis 4400
 And not for that, a trouth, to say yow soth,
 As now y knowe my silf no noder worthe;

Ɔfor syn that crewell Deth hath fro me raught ƒ 105v
 Mi worldis ioy, my lady and maystres,
 Of whom that all my welthe y to me kaught, 4405
 What shuld y do but mase in hevynes?
 Yet, neuyrtheles, to doon yow with gladnes
 I shall assay where y kan for yow loo
 Wisshe the wisshe þat y was wont to do:

Ɔhe first wisshe is, that y wisshen shall, 4410
 So that my lady take noon yvill entent
 (Therin God helpe me, so y wold in all!):
 [1] As poore y were as Fortune hath her sent
 Of good, hir peere in all mendment;
 [2] And to serue God myn hert stood entierly 4415
 As her swet gost hit is ysett holy.

[3] Ɔo loue honure, als, and dreden shame
 I wolde that y were <hir> liche, lich hir grace
 [4] To kepe my silf as well from hurt & blame,
 [5] And wolde y were eek in all goodly place 4420
 Of hardynes, my poore lyvis space,
 <Renomyd> were as werly folk repayre,
 As she is callid, among the ladies, fayre;

[6] Ɔnd were as full of all corage hardy

4401–2 and nevertheless, in truth . . . ?I know myself to be worth no more
 4411–12 if my lady assume no ill will [in me] (God help me therein, I would thus
 in all [my wishes]!)

4413–14 [the first wish is that] I were as poor as she is rich in Fortune's gifts [see
 note]

4417–19 also, I wish that I loved honor and feared shame as much as she did, and
 [I wish I could] match her in grace, which would keep me entirely from injury and
 blame

4420–22 and I also wish I were . . . as renowned for courage in opportune [i.e.,
 appropriate] situations where valiant men are assembled [i.e., among valiant men]

- As that hir praty hert is full of drede, 4425
- [7] Nor that no travayle shuld me more wery
Then doth my slepe when y bere hevy hed
Or long to muse vpon hir goodlyhed;
- [8] And my body as strong were and puysshaunt
As hiris is full febill and sufferaunt; f 106r
- [9] **A**nd in all iustys praysid forto be
As that she is in placis of dauncyng,
To seche worshipe also delitid me
As fer from where hir lust to be dwellyng;
- [10] And that to man y had my demenyng 4435
Bothe of speche and look as wel ensewrid
As that she is of womanhed enewrid;
- [11] **A**nd that y louyd as longith to a knyght
As that she willith pees and rest;
- [12] And alway wolde als þat y were þe wight 4440
Of thought and word and hert with[in] my brest
Gracious lijk hir which is of goode þe best;
- [13] As curteys eek as she is daungerous
(Where y myssay allas forgeue me thus!)
- [14] **A**s goodly man, as plesaunt of langage 4445
As well bilouyd of all good, more & lesse,
- [15] And that we liche were borne as of parage
And in myn hert ther were as gret nobles
As nature hath ysett in hir larges,
- [16] And what y do as very were to man 4450
As hiris are asittyng to woman

4427–28 than does sleep itself when I become drowsy or [than does] musing for a long time on her beauty

4438–39 and that I loved what belongs [pertains] to a knight as much as she desires . . .

4445–46 as excellent a man, as pleasant of language as she is loved by all good people, greater and lesser

4450–51 and [I wish that] the things I do were as proper to a man as her deeds are appropriate to a woman

- [17] **A**ls wise wolde y y were to hir plesaunce,
 As goodly good, as she is good and fayre, 4455
 [18] And of all this when y had suffisaunce
 That all vertu in me thus did repayre.
 [19] I wolde that my Fooes fowr contrarye f 106v
 Iturnyd were vnto my frendis alle
 (That thus for payne doth my coloure palle—

I mene Refuse, Daunger, Drede, and Payne
 That with the deth me dayly doth manace), 4460
 When y were suffisaunt to plesse hir playne:
 Refuse to Mercy, Daunger vnto Grace—
 (That they myght be transformyd so, alace!)
 Drede to Sewrete and Payne vnto Gladnes
 That all in ioy were sett myn hevynes 4465

- T**o plant me welthe within my woful pouzr.
 And this in ende of my dool wisshyng,
 Syn y of loue haue felt the gret vnsoft:
 [20] I wolde it were my lady dere likyng 4470
 Me forto chese. As how? (take my menyng)
 As for loue? nay, but for hir serviture;
 Noon othir sechith my sympill creature.

I wisshid haue ynough, as semeth me
 (Now wisshe more if so that ye haue nede),
 For only saue to plesse yow with, parde, 4475
 All is in vayne y wisshe, so god me spede,
 For in this noyous lijf that now y lede
 Hit sat me best, as wijsly god me saue,
 To wisshe my bere and so to clothe my grave.

4452-53 I wish I were as capable of judging what would please her, and as
 graciously good, as she is good and fair
 4454 and when I had enough of all this [goodness]
 4456 I wish that my four hostile foes
 4458 (Who thus cause me to go pale with pain—
 4471-72 For her lover? no, only for her servant; my humble self seeks no more

And if ye lust to daunce or that ye go, 4480
 I pray yow to asay this sympil on
 To aftir this that y may make yow mo f 107r
 —I mene while spise and wyne is for yow go—
 And thenne fare wele when þat ye list echon,
 Forwhi my Iewbile then is to yow doon, 4485
 And so my newe fortune wol folow soon:

No French

| | | | | |
|---|------------|---|------------|--|
| <p>Swet hert Mercy! For smert —Avert On sert!— I die.</p> | <p> </p> | <p>And ye (Allas) Pite, Parde, On me Non has.</p> | <p> </p> | <p>Trewly, Madame, 4500 That y —On whi!— Shulde dy Were shame.</p> |
|---|------------|---|------------|--|

No French

When that ye goo 4500
 Then am y woo, f 107v
 But ye, swete foo,
 (For ought y playne)
Ye sett not, no,
 To sle me so, 4510
 —Allas and lo!
 But whi, souerayne,
Doon ye thus payne
 Vpon me rayne?
 Shall y be slayne 4515
 Owt wordis mo?
Wolde ye ben fayne
 To se me dayne?
 Now then, certayne,
 Yet do me slo! 4520

4480–82 And if you wish to dance before you go, I ask you to try this little one [till] . . .

4485 for then my banquet/fest for you is over

4489–92 for pain—think on my service to you!—I die

4515–22 Shall I be slain without further words? Would you be pleased to see me die? Now then, certainly, you slay me! For I am he who contents himself . . .

- I**f Or y am he f 108r
 Contentith me
 What so that ye
 Wil to me geve.
- B**ut yet, parde, 4525
 To haue pite
 Ye ought ben she
 On my myscheve.
- O** me foryeue 4530
 And let me lyue
 To y be shreve—
 A day or thre.
- Y**e kan not lyve 4535
 How hit doth cleve
 Myn hert, thus greve,
 But ye hit se.
- L**owre departyng f 108v
 Is, me felyng,
 The deth, <straynyng>
 Myn hert to die. 4540
- f**or, so beyng
 Yow not seyng
 Ful sore musyng
 With wepyng eye.
- f**or deth y crie; 4545
 This lijf y drie
 To turne and lye
 Mi woo waylyng,
That lo trewly 4550
 I wolde ye sie

4525–28 But yet . . . you ought to be the one to have pity on my misfortune

4531 till I [can] be shriven

4533–36 You cannot believe how it cleaves my heart, this torment, unless you see it

4538–39 is, in my opinion, [my] death, constraining

4546 this life I endure

4549–50 so that truly I want you to see

How so that y
Shal ly pynyng.

No French

THus in a pece of tyre y most delite, f 109r
For all therin y sett myn appetit.
It is so swete and plesaunt to the ey 4555
That, though a man were in poynt to die,
It wolde him helpe, and chef in feure white.

Ther is no draught so inly good, trewly,
For though a wrecche formasid in it ly
Yet, parde, lo, it is no vileny. 4560

for who that lust to seche him company,
Than lete him drawe vnto þe most worthi
And there ought noon to blame him, wot ye whi?

for though so be he be not worth a myte
Worship to sewe he is no thing to wite, 4565
For that is sittyng vnto lowe and hy,
So chese ye alle, for þis haue chosen y—
Ner cast noon othir chese, I yow bihite.

No French

ALas, Fortune, alas! myn hevynes, f 109v
As cast <ye> hit shall holde me euyrmore, 4570
Thorough whiche y greves haue a thousand score
Withouten thought that sowneth to gladnes?

Dnto my deth, þis dewre y day bi day
Most ferrist ay from ioy or recomfort,
Syn ther [n]is welthe þat me rekevir may 4575
The mortall crampe this felly me resort.

4565–66 he is not at all to blame for pursuing honor, for that [pursuit] is proper to everyone

4568 nor [do I] plan to choose another . . .

4569–70 . . . do you intend that my heaviness shall control me forever . . . ?

4575–76 since there is no joy that may restore me, the death agony approaches so cruelly

Alas, Fortune! as shape me sum redres
 To hele me of þis karfull, grevous sore
 That y may ben as y haue ben tofore
 Or doo me sone to sterve in my distres. 4580
 Alas, Fortune, alas!

Hope to me saith that y am past the worst
 And praieth me to ben of right good chere,
 But evirmore y fynde to me acurst
 The false and crewellfull Daunger, 4585

Which doth me haue, alas, so gret dewresse—
 But helpe, Fortune, þat y be not forlore
 And set me of my grevous som a schore
 Or y am ded, God take y to witnes!
 Alas, Fortune, alas! 4590

Ch. 287, Carole I

AVaunce thee, Hope, as myn affyaunce. f 110r
Comfort my hert now in his grevous woo,
 For ellis (allas!) he may not bere it, no,
 This outrageous payne and gret penaunce.

Svmtyme y had me thoughtis many oon 4595
 To iape me with, but now, trewly,
 They are me fled and fro me goon
 To purchase me an howre in which to dey,

Wherfore, gef so thou nave puysshauce
 Of alle my grevis forto ese me so, 4600
 Then spedith the hit forto light me lo
 As sumwhat at the lest of my grevaunce.
 Avaunce thee, Hope!

Parde thou hast him made promys
 That at his nede thou shuldist him sokore 4605

4584 . . . I find . . . Daunger malicious toward me
 4588 and set to my burdensome sum [of suffering] a limit
 4601 then hurry it [ease] to me . . .

And forto take him from all hevynes,
But all to longe thou dost him to langore.

☉ haue him yet sumwhat in remembraunce
And helpe him onys at large to skape & goo
The prison of Daunger, his cursid foo, 4610
Or he must die in payne and displesaunce!
Auaunce thee, Hope!

Ch. 288, Carole II

How is hit? how? haue ye forgotten me? 4610v
Ye, certis, ye, y trowe it verily,
Myn only ioy, myn hertis sovl lady! 4615
But what, y me submytt to yowre mercy
As for all that, in what place where y be.

For Hope saith me how þat my poore Trouth,
All list it oft to doon yow on me thynke,
Without so be that of a wantoun slouthe 4620
Gen thorough disdayne, ye lust to let it synke.

But what, y pray yow thenke yet y am he
That serve yow ay vnto my poore degre,
For, promys made, to chaunge it am not y.
No, sothly, no! y levir had to dy, 4625
I promys yow, in myn aduersite!
How is it? how?

Loue doth to gret a wrong, to myn entent,
That he doth not the ladies forto felle
The greves whiche are to ther seruaunt[s] sent 4630
As for ther trouthe that thei loue hem so welle.

4606 and take from him all woe. "Forto take" is parallel to "sokore" (4605).

4609 and help him once again . . .

4617 In spite of all that . . .

4618–21 ?For Hope tells me that my poor Loyalty wishes to cause you to think often wholly on me, unless of willful inactivity bestowed [on me] on account of [your] disdain you wish to let it [my loyalty] sink [into oblivion]. [see note]

4629–31 that he does not cause the ladies to feel the griefs which are sent to their servants in return for their [servants'] loyalty, i.e., that they love them [the ladies] so well

Madame, by yow y say all this, parde,
 For, and ye knew my payne, y wot þat ye
 (The which that Loue doth me in to drie)
 Yowre selven say hit wold hardily 4635
 That to reward my loue ye ought ben she.
 How is it? how?

Ch. 289, Carole III

Now felle me when þis Iubile þus was made f 111r
 Not kowde y ellis but wandir vp & downe
 Musyng in my wakyng dremys sad. 4640
 Myn ydill thought so besy gan me rowne
 That alle the hertis dwellyng in a towne
 Ne nad (no, no) so small to doon as y,
 For in No Care thus lyvid y, wot ye whi.

Seyng y nadde as lady nor maystres, 4645
 As laboure noon me left nas, soth to say
 (Without it were to here evensong and masse
 And for the sowle of my swet hert to pray),
 Which esy lijf y ledde this many day
 Without it were that sum oon, he or she, 4650
 Wolde me complayne of ther aduersite

And pray me that y wolde suche labour take f 111v
 Of ther complayntis as they to me tolde,
 In a Roundell or balade them to make.
 This, for y was so moche to Loue biholde 4655
 In my fer afore past dayes olde,
 Ther nas to Loue so sympill serving wight
 But that y fayne wolde plesse hem if y might.

As now but lat that on me ded requere
 Forto biwayle fortunes stabilnes 4660

4632–36 . . . I say all this concerning you . . . for, if you knew [how severe] my pain [is] (which loue causes me to endure), I know that you yourself would certainly say that you ought to be the one to reward my love
 4655 Thus, because I was so obligated to Love
 4657 there was not such a lowly serving man in Love's service
 4659 Recently one [such servant of love] asked me

And tolde me all the case of his matere
 And y, that fayne wolde doon hem all gladnes,
 Had tane on me right so the bisynes
 And took me so myn enke and papir to,
 And, forbicause me thought it best to do, 4665

Forth bi my silf thus went y me alone
 Toward the see, where nygh my bidyng was
 To y come to an high huge Rokke of stone
 That to biholde hit glemshid bright as glas,
 Where as y fonde a benche of mosse & gras 4670
 So smothe ygrowe and eek so verry soft
 That it was lijk a Carpet, as me thought,

Where as anoon that downe my silf y sat
 And gan me muse to maken þis complaynt,
 Syn it must nede be doon, as wot yow what, 4675
 And that y kan not make it oury quaynt,
 But neuyrtheles these were my wordis faynt
 I for him seide, and gan my papir sprede
 And wrote right thus, if so ye list to rede: f 112r

No French

§

Q Thou Fortune, that causist pepill playne 4680
 Vpon thi change and mutabilite,
 Did y thee so, y blamyd wrong, certayne,
 For stabill yet herto as fynde y the
 Withouten change forto prevaylen me,
 But whereas first thou fond me in symplesse, 4685
 Thou holdist me in myn aduersite
 So that y may biwayle thi stabilnes.

And yet full many holde opynyoun

4667–68 . . . near where my dwelling was till I came to a . . . cliff of stone

4682 if I [made a complaint] against you . . .

4685–86 but whereas you first found me in a state of innocence [and did not aid me], [now] you [continue to] hold me in my misfortune

As that thou shulde now hurt, and now amende,
 And gladly, als, of thi condicioun 4690
 A sympill wight in honure to ascende,
 And most in weele as don him downe descende,
 But y may well contrary lo witnes,
 For of my wrecchid lijf y fynde noon ende,
 So that y may biwayle thi stabilnes. 4695

For well y se how Ricches ascendith
 And all folke bisy him to plesse and yeue,
 Whereas the sympill wight descendith
 Of alle lothid, and noon him lust releue,
 Among whiche on am y in suche myschef 4700
 Ordaynyd Loue, but to moche bisynes
 Thou hast me geve my ladi to acheue,
 So that y may biwayle thi stabilnes,

Thorough which y wyne more maugre oft þen loue
 Bi my to bisy demenyng, f 112v
 And yet, God wot that sitt aboue,
 I most desire of any erthely thing
 To doon all that as were to hir plesyng,
 But of rewdenes thou gevist me such larges
 That thank to pike me wantith the konnyng, 4710
 So that y may biwayle thi stabilnes.

Alas! Fortune, now were me wondir wise,
 Sett me in wey my lady forto plesse,
 And if that y haue tane to high emprise
 I pardoun axe and that thou not displese, 4715
 But turne thi whele my langour to apese
 And of my smert to shape me sum redresse,

4690–92 and customarily, also, by your nature [cause] a lowly person to ascend in honor, and the happiest one . . .

4700–1 among which I am one in such misfortune ordained by Love . . .

4709–10 but you give me such an abundance of uncouthness that I cannot gain [her] favor

4712 ? . . . maintain me [my cause] very wisely [i.e., by helping me]

4715 . . . that you not be displeased

4717 “To shape” is probably parallel to “turne” (4714) rather than “to apese.”

For yet thou baytist me in noyous <lese>,
So that y may biwayle thi stabilnes.

For my dull rewdenes hath no gouernaunce 4720
Thorough my demenyng hir to doon plesere
And yet, god wot, as that y haue pusshaunce,
I sett myn hert, my will, and my desere
Hir forto serue, but all to gret <an hire>
I willid haue thorough fonnyd wilfulnes, 4725
But me preuaylith werryng nor prayere,
So that y may biwayle thi stabilnes.

Now fare well, Fortune, with þi stedfast face,
For, as y fynde, right so y write of thee
And yn my refrait, though y thee manace, 4730
Thou oughtist not, me thenke, displesid be
Though y say trouthe as that þou dost to me, f 113r
But evir truse and rewe on my distres
That y endure in suche aduersite
So that y may biwayle thi stedfastnes. 4735

No French

§

ANd when that y had made þis poor bill,
So hevy gan myn eye liddis way
That even therwith into a slepe y fill,
And all be hit that sum folkis say
To truste on dremys nys but trifill play, 4740
Yet oon may mete the dreme wel yn his sevyng
As aftirward that shall bifalle him evyn.

Dnto record y take myn autour this
Of him that wrote the straunge avisioun

4718 for you continue to harass me with painful deceits
4724 . . . but I have desired an all too great reward . . .
4726 but neither fighting [against you] nor prayer helps me
4732 though I tell the truth about what you do to me
4735 so much that I ought to bewail your constancy

(Which callid was the prewdent Macrobius) 4745
 How it bifill vnto Kyng Sipioun.
 So nys hit no to myn opynyoun
 Fully noon to take onto thym hid,
 Forwhi y thinke it thus, so god me spede:

That hit doth to the body signyfy 4750
 What aftirward as shulde vnto him falle
 (All othir trust y holde it fantasies),
 If so that oon koude well remembre all;
 But to my tale as this retourne y shall:
 That as y lay and slepte þus on the Rokke 4755
 That on the cleef vpon þe banke outstokke

Ovir the see, where that the roryng wawes f 113v
 Did ouyrcast the gravell here and there,
 As that y slepe in sweven y saw this:
 A lady nakid all thing saue hir here, 4760
 And on hir hed lijk as a crowne she were
 Of dowfis white, and many a thousand payre
 Hie ouyr hir gan fletter in the ayre.

About hir wast a kercher of plesaunce, 4765
 And on hir hond an Owle y sigh sittyng.
 Vpon the wawes, owt more suffisaunce,
 Me thought afer she came to me fletyng,
 And verily it semyd me wakyng,
 And went me downe vnto the bank apace
 To vndirstonde of hir what that she was. 4770

When she came nere, þan gan y to hir say,
 "Good thrift, Madame, to yowre streight sidis tayne,
 But whidir wandre ye this wersom way?
 Haue y no service myght be to yow fayne?"

4747-48 so it is not in accord with my opinion to take absolutely no heed of them
 4753 if a person could remember the whole dream

4755 "That" is redundant.

4766-68 it seemed to me that she came floating toward me on the waves from
 afar without any means of support, and truly it seemed that I was awake

Me thynke this watir is vnto yow payne, 4775
 Ne nys hit?" "No, no, noon nys hit, ywis,"
 Coth she, and as y shope me hir to kis

She wayfid me and lokid passyng straunge.
 "What, nys," quod she, "as purse is of an ay!"
 And even forbasshid hir coloure gan to chaunge. 4780
 "Knowe ye not me?" "No—yes! . . . Nay, certes, nay!"
 "No? ye wil not se poore folk nowaday
 Who is hit who þat oft hath bete yowre hound."
 For which y stood so masid in that stound f 114r

That y not koude oon sely word abreide, 4785
 For sene y had hir [t]how y nyste not where,
 To that eft sone she this vnto me seide,
 "Charlis," quod she, "y thanke yowre deyuure
 That ye shal make, suche as my folkis are,
 And but so were that ye shulde ben aquyt 4790
 Iwis y myght wel say y were to wite."

When that y herde hir calle me bi my name
 And that y wel had lokid on hir face,
 Myn hert in me hit quoke for verry shame,
 For wel y wiste þat Venus then hit was 4795
 And seide, "Madame, y putt me to yowre gras.
 And pardone me as of yowre gret nobles
 That y forgat yow of my <symplenesse>."

"Yow pardone what? what nedith þis?" quod she,
 "Yowre mendis is as passyng light to make. 4800
 But how lede ye yowre lijf? Good, lete vs se."
 "As an ancre, Madame, in clothis blake."
 "So thynkith me ye haue professioun take
 Or ellis ye cast to fonde sum ordir newe,
 For strike ye are from Rosett out and blewe." 4805

4779–80 'Well,' she said, 'you're a smooth one!' and, [her] dignity severely injured, she reddened [with anger] [see note to 4193]

4787 until, in a moment, she replied

4805 I.e., you have stopped wearing anything but black.

“**A** trouthe, ye say me soth, so sett me wel,
 For, as for blew, y clothe therin myn hert,
 And all tha roset is yentirmelle.
 I kepe therin my pouer thought covert
 —Alle suche as esy arne, not suche as smert,
 For in tawny y leie alle them aside—
 And to my deth in blak my silf y bide.”

f 114v

“**W**hi so?” quod she, “dwelle ye not in No Care?”
 “Soth, dwelle y so lijk as a masid man
 That hath a bidyng and wot not where,
 For though y whilom fer from Sorow ran
 Yet wol he lo for ought þat evyr y kan,
 Be with me, to and to, wil y or no,
 And as my frend thus cherisse y my fo!”

4815

“**B**ut how is hit—how cometh he to yow so?
 Ye dwelle asondir fer.” “Nay! sothely, nere,
 For when me happith here or there to go
 And thenke that yondir lo my lady dere
 Gaf me this word, or made me suche a chere
 And aundir herde y hir so swetely syng
 And in this chambre led y hir daunsyng . . .

4820

4825

“**I**n yondir bayne so se y hir all nakid
 And this and that y sawe hir yondir worche.
 Here y fond hir slepe, and yondir wakid
 And in this wyndow pleide we at the lorche
 And from this stayre y lad hir to þe chirche
 And bi the way this tale y to hir tolde
 And here she gaf me lo þis ryng of gold

4830

“**A**nd there at Post and Piler did she play
 And so y first my loue vnto hir tolde

4835

4810–11 —all those that are pleasant, [that is,] not those that cause me pain, for those I lay aside [wrapped] in tawny—

4824–25 spoke to me [bade me] thus or gave me a certain look, and yonder I heard her . . .

4830 and in this window seat we played at tables

And there, aferd, she start fro me away f 115r
 And with this word she made myn hert to bold
 And with this word, allas, she made me cold
 And yondir sigh y hir this resoun write
 And here y baste hir fayre, round pappis white; 4840

“**I**n suche a towre also y sigh hir last—
 And yet wel more a thousand thoughtis mo:
 How in that bed the lijf eek from hir past.
 Thus ay newly aquaynt y me with Woo
 To that to chirche he doth me forto goo, 4845
 And for hir sowle vpon my knees pray.
 Lo thus my lyvis tyme y dryve away,

“**F**orcharge nave y of thing to me bileft
 Of good nor harme more then y telle yow þis,
 And as for yet y care no thing of theft, 4850
 For thorough the deth my thoughtis riche[s] y mys
 That stede of hit the wallis bare y kis
 Or ellis a glove or smokke y from hir stale
 Which was þe <shift> of hir y louyd and shall.

“**D**nto this paynfull, ded professioun 4855
 Mi hert and y are swore vnto my last
 Withouten chaunge or newe opynyoun,
 But this service to kepe me to stedfast:
 Ay to remembre on my ioyes past,
 And y that so must doon that wold y lere 4860
 Where that y dwelle from Woo then fer or nere.

“**T**hus haue y told yow my poore ancre lijf f 115v

4848–52 for I take no interest any more in anything that is left to me [since her death], either good or evil, except those things I am telling you about, and still I do not worry at all about theft, because, through death, I have [already] lost my thought's treasure [i.e., my lady] so that instead of it [her] I kiss the bare walls [of a place I shared with her]

4858 to keep me, steadfast, to this service

4860–61 . . . want to learn [from you, i.e., your opinion] whether I dwell far from Woe, then, or near

And what professioun that y am to bounde.

How thenke ye lo nys hit contemplatijf?"

"No, certis." "Whi?" "Ye do yowre silf confound!"

4865

"Whi, wherof serue y now but bete þe ground

As that y goo? ellis helpe y vnto nought."

"Ye, fy!" quod she, "Nay, chaunge ye muste þat thought.

Remembre must ye that ye ar a man

And haue of nature als yowre lymys goode,

4870

So ought ye kyndely, thenk me, spend it than,

Or ellis ye were to moche to blame, bi the roode,

Though that yowre hert so trewly stonde or stode

Yowre ladi to. O, what! now she is goo,

What vaylith here to stroy yowre silf in woo?

4875

Ye may as wel chese yow a lady newe

And for hir sowle as dayly forto pray

And ben in hert to hir as verry trewe

As wilfully to doon yowre silf to day

And forto spende in vayne yowre tyme away,

4880

For, though ye take a lady in yowre arme,

God wot, as now hit doth hir litill harme!"

Alas, Madame," seide y, "that ye shulde say!

Durst y yet speke so fowl a word as this?

For, ben she ded, myn hert must serve hir ay

4885

As y haue swore, and so shall doon, ywis,

For, in good trouthe, ellis did y fer amys!

Allas, Madame, speke me therof no more—

The more ye speke, the more me grevith sore!

f 116r

4863 and to what vow I am bound

4866-67 Why, what purpose do I serve now except to beat the ground as I walk? otherwise I am useless.

4871 so you ought to employ it then according to nature, it seems to me

4873-74 though your heart remains so faithful or obeyed your lady so faithfully. . . .

4877 and pray for *her* soul [that of the new lady] . . .

4883 . . . that you should say [such a thing]!

4885 . . . even though she is dead . . .

4887 . . . else I erred greatly!

“**A**nd where ye say that y shulde ben a man, 4890
 A wrecche am y, an ofcast creature,
 For who is she that ioy of me wolde han
 That am forfadid so in my figure?
 Certis, to wrappe me in a sepulture
 Me sittith bet, as wisly god me saue, 4895
 Then in myn armes a newe ladi haue!”

“**N**ow, bi my soth, that were a worthi toy!
 So preue ye well ye are not worth at all!
 (What nede y lo to paynt or make it koy?)
 And in this case yowre silf so shame ye shall, 4900
 And me, and alle my folke in generall,
 For alle may say my service is to badde
 That ye naue lust to serue me as ye had;

“**A**nd, more, therin ye do yowre lady shame,
 For all the world wol thynke hit, verily, 4905
 And sche had ben as folk hath gen hir name,
 Ye wolde haue tane anothir hastily,
 But they wil say ye doon it for a sy
 And clakke of hir a full vngoodly clawse—
 Thus shall ye doon hir shame without a cause!” 4910

“**A**llas, Madame, as wisly fynde y blis
 As me were loth to shame it yow or yowris
 And most of alle my lady dere, ywis,
 But y se Deth so crewelly devowris
 Suche folkis fayre, and in cheef of ther flowris, f 116v

4898–99 In this way you show clearly that you are not worth anything at all!
 (What need I color my words or keep still?)

4901–2 and me, and all my followers without exception, for [then] all [my
 followers] can say that my service is very distasteful [because]

4905 “Hit” anticipates next two lines.

4906 [that] if she had been [the sort of person] people say she was

4908–9 but people will say you do it [refrain from taking a new lady] to dishonor
 [your dead lady] and [they will] tell very unflattering stories about her [see note]

4912 I would be loath to shame you or your followers

4915 . . . and especially the best (of them)

That, as me thynk, hit is a choys in vayne
To chesen that on shall not long attayne,

“**F**or, chase y me a lady lo this day
(As well y wot that shal me not bitide),
Yet shulde y drede the deth of hir alway, 4920
To thynke how yong and fayre my lady dide.
Thus gif y shulde my service newe prouide
Then brought y me in sorow dubbil fold:
As first to thynke vpon my dayes old

“**A**nd then agayne vpon my service dewe, 4925
How were me best to sett my gouernaunce
To get the favour of my lady newe,
So hard it is in takyng acqueyntaunce,
For that which is vnto sum oon plesaunce
Anothir will, parcas, ben with hit wroth 4930
—The craft of loue is straunge who to hit goth!—

“**F**or some they ioy hem in a port al straunge
And othir some in gladsom demenyng
And some wil thynke he vsith fillith of change
And some wil deme this word is flateryng. 4935
Thus newe to lere were y in my gidyng,
For, all knew y my lady verry wel,
Anothir newe, y knowe hir neuyr a del.”

“**Q** what!” quod she, “ye make a gret perail
To loue! me thynke ye nede not don hit so, 4940
For if ye cast in loue preuayle f 117r
Spare not to speke, spede ye so or no.

4917 to choose that [which] one may not keep for long

4921–25 because I would forever be thinking about how young and beautiful my lady [was when she] died. So if I should offer my services again [to another lady], (then) I would bring myself into double sorrow by thinking, first, about my past [my first love] and then about my service due [to my new lady]

4929 for that which is pleasing to one person

4932 for some women take pleasure . . .

4934–35 . . . some [ladies] will think he uses the vile speech of fickleness, and some will think this [same] speech is flattering

Parde, noon wol bicomme yowre foo
 For yowre good will, this ben ye sewre;
 Hit were tomoche ageyne nature; 4945

“**A**nd where ye care for yowre havour
 (Where ye shulde ben mery or sad),
 Loke wher ye cast stonde in favour
 And who that most in prays is had
 With hir, where he loke glom or glad. 4950
 Folow the same, if that ye kan,
 And hard is but ye plese hir than.

“**A**nd where ye wolde as haue mor dred of deth
 (Had ye a lady) for hir then yowre silf,
 Parde, deth in yowthe not alle asleth! 4955
 Some may ye se þat lyve iiij score and twelfe
 (And bi that howre were tyme for þe to delve!)
 So, fy, for shame! ye ought to trust þe best
 Of euery dowt to sett yowre hert at rest.

“**A**nd where ye cast alway from loue withdrawe, 4960
 A feith, y trowe yowre labour vaylith not,
 For when ye se that that ye nevir saw
 It may wel happe yow thynke ye neuyr thought.”
 And as y threw myn eye therwith aloft,
 Me thought y saw, descendyng in þe ayre, 4965
 A chare of gold, so verry riche and fayre

That forto se hit nas no wondir lite 4970
 —The ricches of the stonnes thervpon!—
 Whiche drawn was with two large stedis white,
 And, as me thought, on whelis foure it ran;
 About it als y sigh full many on

4946 And in the place in your argument where you [express] worry about how you should act

4948 determine where you contrive to stand in her favor

4951–52 . . . and, if you do this, it is unlikely that you will fail to please her.

4958–59 . . . you ought to expect the best [outcome] of every uncertain situation

4971–72 around it I also saw (very) many a one that exerted themselves to push and shove it

That did hir payne to put it forth and shove,
And in this chayre ther sat a quene, aboue,

That forto say yow how she ware hir gere
Hit was ydoon hardly at poynt devise, 4975
And if that y shall say yow what sche were—
But, verry god, me pouzt it passyng nyse
(All though it riche were of a wondir prise!)
For euyrmore the coloure gan to change,
So semyd me hir surcot verry straunge, 4980

For the body was kowchid thorough & thorough
As euyrmore a Saphir and a balayse,
That to biholde it, as y tolde yow now,
So as the playtis vp and downe arayse,
So did dyuerse the hewe in sondry wise, 4985
For, though on wey the Safir shewid blew,
This way the balise geveth a purpil hew,

And as the surcot <forgeth> in substaunce
Of ermyn and is powdrid round about,
So was it wrought with fyn pynche & plesaunce, 4990
And in the stede of powdryng all without,
As y biheld, right wel persayue y mought
How it was sett ful thikke with laughyng eyene
—But many moo that wepte y myght asprien! f 118r

Dpon the whiche she ware a mantell large 4995
That many fold was festid with a lace,
Bicause only hit bare so gret a charge

4976–77 . . . what she wore—well, by God, it seemed to me absolutely extraordinary

4981–87 because the body [of the dress] was studded at regular intervals [with jewels], and every place [there was] a sapphire [there was also] a balas ruby [i.e., they were set in pairs], so that when one looked at it, . . . as the folds [of the lower part of the surcoat] rose and fell, so the color changed in various ways, for though one way the sapphire looked blue, the other way the ruby gives a purple hue

4988–90 and just as the surcoat counterfeits ermine and is powdered all over [like it], so it [Fortune's surcoat] was made of fine pleated lawn

4996–97 that was tied many times with a cord, because by itself it bore so great a weight [was so heavy]

Of which the coloure blak nor grene it nas
 But most lijk to a raynbow hewe it was,
 Forwhi the silkis were so verry straunge 5000
 That ay from blew to reed or grene þei change,

Of which the tissew ran in clowde werk
 And, as thei brak now there and here,
 Some with rayne and tempest lokid derk,
 And out of othir smote sonne bemys clere 5005
 And othir some were worst in a manere
 Of moonys, weche that <wroft> wer yn a rang[e],
 Some at a wane, some cresyng aftir change.

A bordir had this mantell eek theron
 That praty was and riche in verry dede, 5010
 For made it was a breere of gold that ron
 Now here and there, with rosis whit & reede,
 Vpon the which, and levis as þei sprede—
 Some loose, some fast—þei sett were ful of ston,
 And that of perlis passyng many oon. 5015

The lynyng of hit was with nedill wrought
 So playn, so thikke, so smothe, so prately
 With litill, litill flowris soft,
 The soven and the daisy,
 But most of pancy myght y spy. f 118v
 About hir nek also she ware
 A serpe, the fasson to declare:

Hit wrought was full of broken balis
 Of dise, and as they fillen out,

5002-3 of which the cloth was adorned with cloud-like shapes and, as the clouds broke here and there

5006-8 and some other [figures] were wrought in the manner of moons, which were arranged in a row, some waning, some waxing after the new moon

5011-15 for it was made like a briar of gold that twined back and forth, with white and red roses, upon which, and [upon the] leaves as they spread out—some [hanging] loose [from a single thread], others [sewed down] fast—they were set all over with (precious) stones, which were exceedingly beautiful pearls.

5016 The lining (of it) was embroidered

Bi lynkis and so downe avalis, 5025
 To se them how they werle abowt
 Hit wondir was, withouten dowl,
 Whi they turnyd so many chaunsis
 And that so ful of verryaunces!

Hir crowne was made with wawis nyse 5030
 And sett ful of karbonkil <ston>,
 The reysyng vp with flowre-delise;
 Hir heer also so bright it shon
 That it was hard to loke it on,
 Which spredde hir shuldris all abrod 5035
 And all the chayre in which she rood.

Hir visage was eek wel ymade,
 But then sumwhile she lowrid sore,
 And even as soun she lokid glad,
 And in hir hond a wheel she bore 5040
 And gan to turne it euyrmore
 That berel was, me thought, or glas,
 And this was wreten in compas:

“I shal rayne” “Y rayne” “Y haue raynyd”
 And “Y owt rayne” was wreten last of al, 5045
 On which that many folkis hem constraynyd f 119r
 To gete aloft that sone downe from hit fall
 And [some] wolde clyme þat myght no thing at all,
 And othir some they sat vp passyng hy,
 Among the which þat on y myght aspy 5050

So inly fayre, so full of goodlynes,
 So wel ensewrid bothe of port and chere,
 That this bithought me lo dowltes,
 How that it was myn owen self lady dere,

5030–32 Her crown was scalloped and set with carbuncles, the point of each wave [was decorated] with fleur-de-lis

5039 and just as quickly she looked happy

5045–48 and I [am] without reign was written last, on which [wheel] many people struggled to get on top who quickly fell off [it], and some wanted to climb [on it] who were completely unable to

And ay the more, the more she came me nere! 5055
 "Allas!" quod y, "But lyvith my lady yet?
 Nys she not she that y se yondir sitt?"

So that y stood so masid and formad
 That y not kowd but, stele, to gase hir on,
 To Venus saw how sore y was bistad 5060
 And to me seide, "Where loke ye, doty fon?"
 But my heryng so fer was fro me gon
 That y not herde nor wiste what þat <she> seide
 To she me shook so that y with abrayde,

And with a sigh y seide hir thus, "Allas, 5065
 O fayre madame, now be myn helpe or neur!
 For Ihesu wot y stond now in the cas
 That, certis, swete the deth were to me—leuyr
 Then that y shulde from hir as now disseuer
 Which is my lady hie on yondir whell!" 5070
 "Ye, wo is me," quod she, "for yowre seek heel!

"I trowe that ye haue spide a mase, 5075
 Or ye haue tane sum sodeyne sweuene,
 For wheron ist, good, that ye gase?"
 "A quene." quod y, "I kan not neiuene 5075
 Hir name that cometh downe from hevене,
 And in hir hond she hath a whyll
 Wheron y see my lady well!

"I pray yow turne abowt—not hastily,
 But as it were who <sekith> for othir thing— 5080
 And loke where so that ye kan ought aspy
 What that she is or gesse to yowre semyng."
 "No more." quod she, and lete downe fall a ryng
 To pyke a countenaunce, so wot ye what,
 And turnyd as it had ben [a]bowt for that 5085

5059 that I could do nothing but, motionless/dumb, stare at her
 5064 till she shook me so that I recovered therewith [from my astonishment]
 5080–82 but as if you were looking for something else—and see whether you can
 see (at all) who she is or figure out [who she is], in your opinion
 5085 and turned around as if it had been for that

- A**nd so bigan to cast hir eye aside
 Of which look for shame therwith she blosht
 "A Seynt Antone, but turne yow! hide, hide, hide!
 Allas, that ther nar ny of hir sum boch!"
 "But wherof, la, this fer, madame? O towch!
 Bi verry God, ye are to ferfull oon!" 5090
 "Ye, ye, my sone, y wolde some were agoon,
- F**or trowe ye that they wol not thynke amys
 That fynde as this—no more but ye and y?"
 "Whi, gef thei doo what kan thei thynk on þis 5095
 Owtsept—? my lady, clene y them defy!"
 "Ye? Baw! My sheele straw in yowre ey,
 For though ye men in such case litill care
 It sittith well we wymmen to ben ware! f 120r
- Y**ond same is Fortune. How, knowe ye hir not?" 5100
 "O no, Madame—whi yes! bi god, now . . . now . . .
 Y am . . . y am right wel on hir bithought.
 She stale with deth my lady, wot ye how,
 Which yondir sitt! Bi god, y make a vow:
 Might y hir reche, anoon y shulde hir slee!" 5105
 "Yee, nar ye holde, ye are to perlous bee!
- N**ow, good, graunt vs a lettir of yowre pese,
 But is hit and yowre lady that ther sit?"
 "O yee—O nay, no, nyst—O yes, dowltes!"
 "O trouthe, me thynke ye ought wel borow wit! 5110
 For, out of drede, wot ye hit is not hit,
 All be she fayre and wel vnto hir lijk.
 A, ye, my frend, kan ye suche motis pijk?
- I** haue aspide ye, marchaunt, at the fayre,
 (Ye lust not on a sympil market see!) 5115

5092 . . . I wish that some [i.e., all] of these people were not here

5106 Yea, if you are not restrained, you are capable of doing harm!

5107 . . . grant us assurance of your peaceful behavior [S&D]

5110 In truth, it seems to me you ought to go borrow some brains!

5113 Ah, indeed, my friend, can you see those tiny differences [—or not]?

That cast yow to engros vp such a payre
 As that yowre ladi was, this semeth me,
 And now this same, which lakkith no bewte.
 Ye wold ben ditid sothely, were þis knowe,
 As for a regrater of the fayre, y trowe.

5120

“**I** wend that ye wold neuyr bie nor selle
 Suche litill ware, but ye it had forswore,
 But now ye nave not so, me thynkith well,
 Of which Fortune thank y, not yow, therefore.
 And if yowre hert be sett on hir so sore
 Spede if ye kan; y cast yow not prevayle,
 Forwhi ye haue eschewid my counsayle.

f 120v

“**A**nd neuyrtheles y seide it for the best,
 As haue y ioy, more for yowre ese þen myn,
 For as me thought hit more were for yowre rest
 A lady chese then thus yowre silf forpyne
 As that y tolde yow now right wel afyn:
 When ye had sene, parcas, ye neuyr saw
 It myght wel happe yow fynde a bon to gnaw.

5130

“**A**nd how is now? what, cast yow loue or no?
 It is not she, y put yow out of drede.
 So whethir wil ye, loue or lete hir go?”
 “Allas, lady, what is me best do rede!
 I am so smyten with hir goodlihede

5135

5119–20 You would be indicted truly, were this known, as a monopolist of the fair . . .

5121–24 I thought that you would never buy or sell [i.e., weren't interested in] such small stuff [as love of ladies], but [that] you had forsworn it [such traffick-ing], but now it seems to me you have not [forsworn it], for which I thank Fortune [she motivated you by showing you the lady], not you yourself

5126 . . . I do not intend to help you

5130–31 . . . it would be more for your peace of mind to choose a lady than thus to torment yourself

5133 . . . that which you never saw before

5136–37 It is not she [your dead lady], I [say to] remove any trace of doubt, so which will you [do], love her or let her go?

5138 . . . advise me what is best [for me] to do!

That, next my lady, but y loue hir best, 5140
I am not lijk to sett myn hert at rest.

“**A**nd ner it no[t] that she is hir so lijk
Not shulde y loue hir—nor noon lyvynge—
The which sight doth my dedly hert aqueke,
That syn that Deth made karfull departyng 5145
Bitwene me and my lady, saw y thyng
Thorough which y felt on only ioy at al,
Nor yet, owt this, y wot y neuyr shal,

“**F**or leuyr were me serue hir lo for nou3t
Then to ben kyng of al þis world so round; 5150
If so were onys that she myght knowe my þou3t, f 121r
Y nolde no more desire vpon the ground;
And without yow þat may it not be found—
Thus redles in my very gost y stond;
Save lijf and deth, y put it in yowre hond. 5155

“**H**aue y doon messe, þen ax y yow pardoun.
Haue y my deth desert, then let me dy!
Beth not my foo (O welaway!) so sone!
If y offendid haue, y mercy cry,
And, as ye lust, me now this mater gy; 5160
I me content in all thing moche or lesse.
What may y more then axe yow foryefnesse?”

“**T**hen all forgeve—I am not so crewell
To yow as ye to serue me were all straunge!—
So that hensforth yowre hert in euery dell 5165
Ye geve it hir and never forto change.

5140 that, next to my lady, unless I love her [the new lady] best

5144 the sight of whom [i.e., the new lady] causes my heart, nearly-dead, to tremble so

5146–47 . . . I saw no thing through which I felt a single joy at all [in which I took any joy], nor yet, without this [new lady], I know I never shall

5155 with the exception of [my] life and death, I put the whole matter in your hands

5165 on the condition that henceforth . . .

5166 “Forto change” is parallel to “geve.”

And for <yon> wheel renyth so gret a raunge
That it is hard for yow to come hir to,
Then shall y telle yow how that ye shal do:

“**H**ange hir vpon my kercher of plesaunce, 5170
And y shal brynge thee vp to hir aloft.”

“Madame, y shall obey yowre ordinaunce.”

“Nay, yet abide, my frend. Y am bithouzt . . .

As for Fortune, y will ye sle hir nouzt.

That shal ye promys me yet or ye go.” 5175

“Madame, all this it nedith not, no, no,

“**F**or all the world y graunt vnto hem pese— 5180
Saue only Deth, that slew my lady dere.

Therof ye must me pardone lo dowlse,

For him to loue y kan in no manere, 5180

Though that y lyvid here a thousand yere!”

“Nay, sothely lo ye resoun haue in that.

But honge now on my kercher, wot ye what.”

And so dredles hir kercher thus y took, 5185
And as me thought she bare vp me so hie

That even for fere to falle therwith y quok

And gan, “O lady Venus! Mercy!” cry

So lowde that it awook me verily,

And fond my silf wher as y was downe layd

And in myn hond, as y from slepe abreid, 5190

Yet se y wel a gret pese of plesaunce,

The which y took and in my bosum put,

So forto kepe it in remembraunce.

And forbicause þat y nedis mut

Muse on my dreem, y sett me vp afoot 5195

And so gan wandre in my thoughtis sade,

To that y come, vndir a grene wood shade,

5167 and because yon wheel . . .

5170 Hang here upon my kerchief . . .

5194–95 and because I had to ponder on my dream, I got to my feet

Dpon a launde, the gras soft, smothe, & fayre
 That likyng gret hit was me to bihold,
 And homward þus as y gan me repayre 5200
 I fond a company, some yong, some olde,
 That gan eche othir fast in armys hold,
 For at the Post and Piler did þei play;
 And all were gentil folkis, dar y say, f 122r

As ladies and ther wymmnen many oon 5205
 With many a squyer and many a knyght,
 Among the whiche myn eyen spide anoon
 The selfe lady (bi verry God of myght!)
 That y se Fortune bere so high on hight!
 But how me than? had y more ioy or woo? 5210
 Now, certis, wel, y kan not telle yow, noo!

For ioyful was y on hir to biholde
 Bicause she was so lijk my lady swete,
 But me to queynt not durst y be so bold
 Nad be the dreem that y did of hir mete 5215
 That Venus had hir helpe to me bihight
 (As y haue to yow told what þat she said),
 For which that I tho þe lesse me dismayd.

Now was ther on had knowen me tofore
 That me aspide and, y not how [. . .], 5220
 And in his corse he fel and had fortore
 His hose, at which full many of hem lough.
 "Now laughe," seide he, "for some han pleid ynough,"
 Which to me spake, "Y thank yow, frend, my fal,
 For, nad ye be, y had hit not at al." 5225

"But neuyrtheles ye ar welcome, parde,

5209–10 that I saw Fortune bear so high aloft! But what of me, then? . . .

5214–15 but I would not have dared be so bold as to introduce myself had it not been for the dream I dreamt of her

5220 . . . I don't know how [line incomplete]

5224–25 who then said to me, "I thank you, friend, for my fall, for, if it had not been for you, I would not have had it [an opportunity to take a rest from the game] at all"

So now gef rome, take here a pleyer in,
 For he shal pley his pagaunt now for me,
 (Though þat his chekis be but passyng thyn!)
 Set forth! let se how fayre ye kan bigynne!"

f 122v

"Nay, good Cosyne," seide y, "therof no more!"
 "Seynt Yve, ye shall! see þat myn hose is tore?"

Bi hond he hent me so, and to the place
 He drew me in. "Is ther noon othir bote?"
 Seide y. "Noo, no, ye get no bettir grace!"
 Quod y, "Then must y, to, that nedis mote."
 And so to renne y gan to make a foot,
 And wel y wot y ran not long abowt
 Or that y on had towchid of the rowt,

5235

And as the corse thus droue me here & there,
 Vnto my lady newe so streight y went.
 With gastful hert that quoke for verry fere
 —How me were best to vtir myn entent?
 Yet at the last, on this pooreposse y bent,
 When that ther stood no mo but she and y—
 "A questioun wold y axe of yow, lady."

5240

5245

"**O**f me?" quod she, "now, good, what þing is þat?"
 "It is not small, madame, y yow ensewre.
 I put a case: if so myn hert it sat
 To yow in loue aboue eche creature,
 Told y it yow, wold ye it so diskeuer
 And make of it a skoffe, or yet a play,
 In which parcas my lijf so myght it way?"

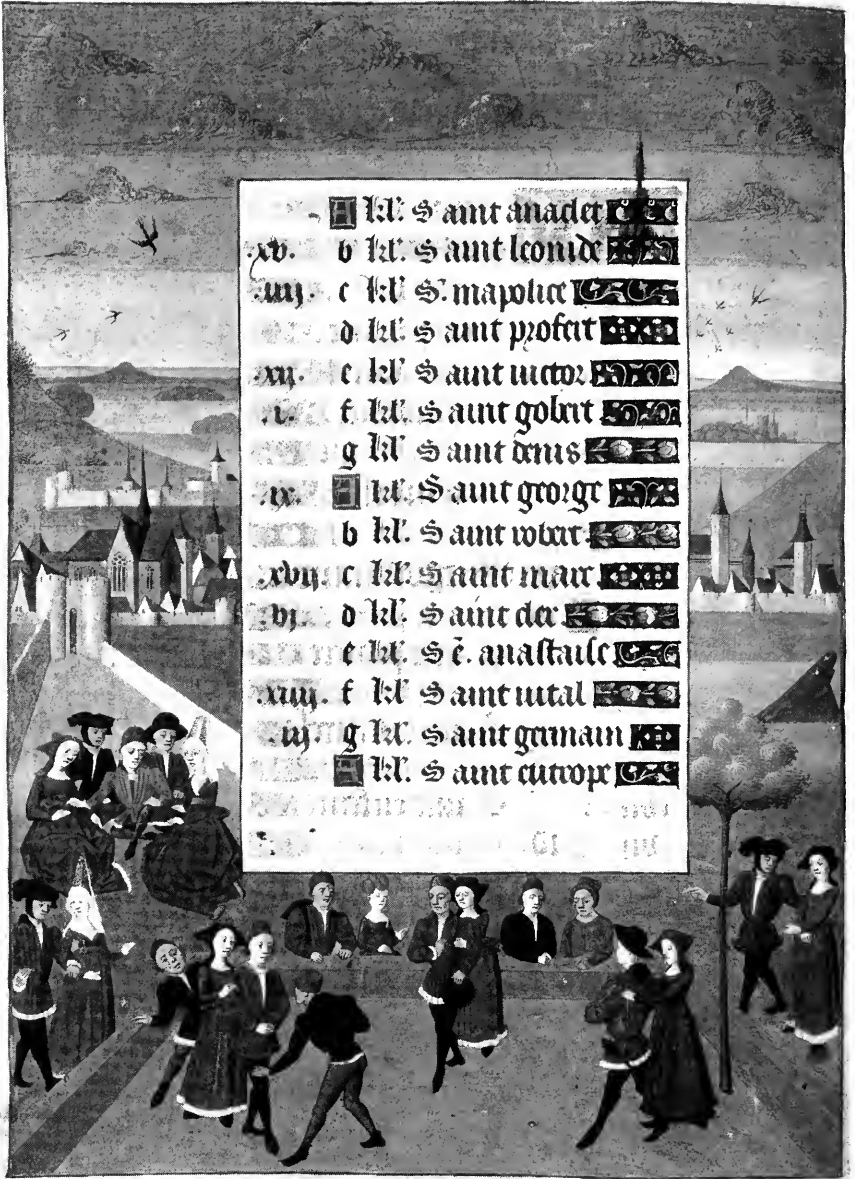
5250

5228 for he shall play the role in my place [take my place in the game]

5232 . . . you must! [don't you] see that my stocking is torn?

5242–43 With timid heart that quaked with true fear—how could I best express my meaning?

5253 . . . my life might be laid in the balance [i.e., I might not be able to endure it]



Chantilly, Musée Conde MS. 76, fol. 46v.

“God helpe me, nay! Why, wat erthely wight
 That louyd me vnto myn honour evyr, 5255
 Sothely me thynke y did him gret vnright f 123r
 Without the more he were vnto me lever.
 Eek who wil skorne, skoffe on! for y wil neur,
 For bett y wot in suche case how me <sit>
 To doon, and ellis y had but litill witt.” 5260

“Mercy, madame, for y stond in the case
 That bothe my lijf and deth doth on yow hong,
 For certis, swete, but ye haue on me grace,
 As for my deth, y must it nedis fong.
 I kan not say þat y haue louyd yow long 5265
 But well y wott y loue yow so, my dere,
 That bothe ye are my ioy and payne in fere.

“My payne are ye only for fere and drede
 The which y haue to playne yow of my greef,
 And then my ioy, that is yowre goodlihede 5270
 Forto bihold and shall while þat y lyue.
 Ther nys no more, but from þis tyme do preve
 In any thing where that y be yowre man,
 And if ye othir fynde—so sle me than!

“This is hit all that y of yow desere, 5275
 That as yowre gostly child ye wold me take,
 And ye to ben my fayre shrift fadir dere
 To here the poore confessioun that y make,
 And that <ye> not my simpilnes forsake,
 For half so moche y dar not to yow say 5280
 As that y wolde, and þese folk were away.

5256 “Him” refers to “wight” (5254).

5257–58 unless he were dearer to me [for it]. Moreover who wishes to scorn [him] . . .

5259 for I know very well what it is proper for me to do in such a case

5268–69 You are my pain only because of the fears and doubts I have about expressing my grief to you

5272–74 . . . but from this moment determine whether I am you man [i.e., whether I serve you faithfully] in all matters, and if you find otherwise . . .

5275 This is all I want from you

5277 “To ben” is parallel with “take” (5276).

5281 . . . if we were alone

- “**E**ek not y eft from this tyme how aquaynt f 123v
 Without the helpe of yow, myn owne swet hert
 —Allas, be war! yowre coloure gynnys faynt!
 Pynne vp yowre kercher! Kepe yowre face covert! 5285
 Ye mow say how the sonne hit doth yow smert.”
 “Bi my good soth, y holde yow nyse!” quod she,
 And did right so, and syns seide to me,
- “**I** trowe wel ye haue my rewde haver sene,
 The which ye prayse so cleyn out [of] mesure. 5290
 Gramercy yow therof, and not yowre eyene,
 For which ny me thei fynde no such figure
 To <cawse> yow of so gret a payne endure,
 But many suche as ye in wordis dy
 That passyng hard ther graffis ar to spy. 5295
- “**A**lso, to lett yow speke, that may y not,
 And when ye lust so say me what ye wol,
 But forto loue it cometh not in my thought,
 Saue only on which plesith me at full,
 Nor y cast not to me noon othir pull, 5300
 But in all that ye loue in good entent
 I thank yow—but wist y ye othir ment
- “**G**od helpe me so, y shulde yow þen eschew;
 But then y gesse ye wolde myn honour more.”
 “Now dredles lo, madame, þat is yet trew, 5305
 For leuer nad y ben to lijf ybore
 Then that y shulde, for any gref or soore,
 Wil you more fer þen ye may goodly graunt
 Vnto me, wrecche (durste y say—yowre servaunt?). f 124r

5282 Also I do not know how to get to know you . . .

5287–89 “. . . you are clever!” she said, and pinned it up and afterwards said to me, “I believe you have seen my untutored behavior”

5291–92 I thank *you* for that and not your eyes, because they find no such person in my vicinity

5302–4 . . . but if I knew that you intended something else [i.e., something less honorable] . . . I would then have nothing to do with you; but on the other hand I suppose you desire my honor more

5308 wish from you more than you may grant willingly.

“**B**ut wold god ye knew myn hert eche deel!
Kan ye not rede?” “Yes, so so.” quod she. 5310

“O what, dere hert, though fer from yow y dwel
Yet wil ye graunt me writ to yow, parde
And not disdayne yow on hit forto see?
And send me so of hit sum word agayne, 5315
If that y shulde desire yow such a payne?”

“**T**he raket cometh! Y graunt hit yow. Writ on!”
And so anothir came and afore hir stood,
For which þat y must nedis ben agoon,
Yet neuyrtheles me thought it did me good 5320
That she so moche knew of myn hert, bi þe rood,
And so we ran a corse or two, no more,
Or that we must depart, vnto my sore,

For Crepusculus, that revith day his light,
Gan in the west his cloudy mantel shake, 5325
And forbicause y fastid lo that nyght,
From oon to oon of them my leve y take,
But, lord! so that myn hert bigan to quake
When þat y take shulde of my lady leue,
And for no thing it wold me not bileue. 5330

She blusshid reed to see how that y ferde,
For, as y kist, y seide, “Now welcome, Sorow.”
“Ye made me gast!” quod she, “y shrympe yowre berd,
But may ye not abide here to tomorow?”
“A, madame, no! fare wel, Seynt Iohne to borow!” f 124v
“Bi holy God, y trowe bet that ye may
Ellis come and se vs lo sum othir day.”

“**M**adame, a trouthe, y thanke yowre ladiship.
It may me happe to se yow here this weke.”

5316 if I should desire you to take such pains?

5322 and so we took a couple more turns, not more

5330 and not for anything would my heart remain with me, [i.e., my heart insisted on staying with the lady]

5336–37 . . . I hope very much that in that case you can come and see us . . .

Thus did y so depart the feleship, 5340
 And gan me forth to my poor loggyng peke,
 But all that nyght myn hert did rore & seke,
 For nought me nyst as what was best to do—
 To speke or writ when next y came hir to.

But neuyrtheles to this purpos y fell: 5345
 That when y myght (for fere of forgetyng),
 Bi mouth y wolde my mater to hir tell,
 And, lak of space, to take it bi writyng;
 Forwhich that thus bigan my new servyng,
 When þat y fond my tymys of laysere, 5350
 As sewith next, if it lust yow to here.

No French

Of fayre most fayre, as verry sorse & welle 5355
 From yow me cometh, as brefly to expres,
 Such loue þat y ne may it from yow helle
 All shulde y die—God take y to witnes!
 Desire me takith with such a ferventnes
 That y must nedis put me at yowre will
 Wherso ye lust, of rigoure or kyndenes,
 Me forto saue or do me payne or spill.

Iwot my gilt it hath deservid deth 5360
 That y was bold to sett so high myn hert,
 But, in good feith, while þat me lastith breth,
 For payne or woo y may it not astert;
 As forto take yow nere me then my shert, 5365

5341–42 and slunk to my humble lodging, but all that night my heart roared and sighed

5346–49 that when I could, I would tell her my situation by mouth (for fear she would forget me), and, [because (or when) there was] lack of opportunity [to talk to her], to take the opportunity to write to her. “Forwhich” (therefore) indicates a general relation of cause and effect; it refers to the events of the previous two stanzas and not simply to the previous line.

5352 Most fair of the fair, . . .

5358–59 whether you wish . . . to save me or cause me pain or [cause me] to die
 5364–67 I know of no better plan by which to bridle love, [but] to take you nearer than my shirt, to bind myself to you entirely in spite of pain and sorrow, [whether doing so] save me . . .

To bridill loue y kan no bett[ir] skile 5365
 But bynde me hool to yow for payne or smert
 Me forto saue or do me payne or spill.

What ye me geve y may it not denye
 But hit agre as for myn aventure,
 But, by my trouth, vnto the howre y dye, 5370
 I shall be to yow trewe, y yow ensewe,
 As hert kan thynke and not forto discure
 What ye me say and will y kepe it still.
 So am y yowre tofore eche creature,
 Me forto saue or do me payne or spill. 5375

☉ mercy, swet, allas! y kan no more!
 But what yow list my lust hit must fulfill;
 But for my loue sumwhat y wold therfore
 Me forto saue or do me payne or spill.

No French

More then body, hert, good, and servise 5380
 As <naue> y ellis to yeue yow, fayre princes,
 The which that y in my most feithful wise
 Yeue vnto yow, what payne or hevynes
 That me bifalle, but and yowre gantiles
 For myn hool hert of yowre the quantite 5385
 As of a pynnys hed me yaue—or lasse—
 As for a while it shulde suffisen me. f 125v

And for my servise, with a ferfull gost,
 As y dar say, y axe yow loue agayne;
 Of my desere lo it is the most, 5390

5372 . . . and will not reveal

5378–79 but in return for my love I would like to have [something] that would save me . . .

5380–84 I have no more to give you than my body, heart, goods, and service . . . , which I give you most faithfully, whatever pain or woe should befall me, but if, [out of] your kindness

5388–90 and for my service . . . I ask you for your love in return; it is my greatest desire

For of this yeft if y were in certayne
 As had y more comfort, soth to sayne—
 Not sool comfort but more felicitye
 Then in this world may be writene playne,
 Withouten more, the which suffisid me.

5395

In ouyrplus take ye my body and good.
 Parde, this bargeyne is but resonable!
 If ye refuse ye ar to blame, bi the rood,
 For in good feith y shall be to yow stable,
 As sikir trewe, and eek as servisable
 As euyr was man of high or low degre
 Yow forto loue (though þat y be not able),
 Mi fore request so wold suffisen me.

5400

☉ good, dere hert, though y kan bettir playne
 Bi writyng þen bi mouth, yet ye
 As takith not the lesse regard of my payne,
 But graunt my yeft and hit suffisith me.

5405

No French

Right yongly fayre, replet with goodlihed,
 Alak for lak nede shulde enneden me
 To sewe for pite to yowre womanhed,
 When, as me thynkith, ye mowe wel knowe, parde,
 Mi servise shewith a preef in eche degre:
 Mi dede accordith with my fore promys—
 And syn tyme ylost may not rekeuerid be,
 Allas! how long wil ye straunge in þis wise?

B87

5410

f 126r

5415

Tought ellis desire y yow, in verry dede,
 But that ye list so moche vnto me see

5393–95 Not only comfort, but, more [than that], happiness . . . which would suffice me

5407 but accept my gift and it is enough

5412 that my service presents evidence in every way

5417–18 ?but that you choose to be so attentive to my situation that this painful life . . .

Bi which þis paynful lijf here that y lede
 Might be retornyd vnto felicite,
 And if y euyr yow offende, then ye 5420
 (As wilfully, y mene, in my servise)
 So as it plesith yow, punysshe my foly.
 Allas! how long wil ye straunge in þis wise?

Now, good swet hert, what thing is it þat ye drede
 To helpe yowre man in his aduersite? 5425
 God helpe me so, y wold not for my hed
 Will ye more fer then ye with honeste
 May wel fulfill; and syn that y am he
 Which my will hool with yowr will doth suffise
 And nought desire but o drope of pite, 5430
 Allas! how long wil ye straunge in þis wise?

What may y say? now fayre swet hert, pite
 Haue on my greef and sumwhat bet avise
 Then for my loue to shewe me cruelte.
 Allas! how long wil ye straunge in þis wise? 5435
No French

B88

Aftir wyntir, the veer with foylis grene,
 f 126v
 Aftir the sterry nyght, the morow gray,
 Lucyna chaungyng in her hornys shene,
 The enpese made of many gret affray—
 The sondry chaunge of thingis se y may, 5440
 But ye, swet hert, so voyde are of pite
 That, for no thyng y kan yow write or say,
 The chaunge of yowre mystrust kan y not se.

5421 (If I offend you on purpose, I mean)

5424–27 . . . why are you afraid to help your liege man . . . I would not for my head [i.e., for anything] desire you to go further than you honor


5429 whose will accords completely with your will

5439 the peace made after many a great disturbance

Bothe fowle and best with word entamyd bene.
 The spirit (also with speche enforsid) say 5445
 The trouthe of thing þat man wol litill wene:
 With speche the heven to perse—this is no nay;
 But what promys or oth y make, ma fay,
 As in no wise kan y entristid be,
 So to vntrewe ye thynke me, welaway! 5450
 The change of yowre mystrust kan y not see.

But though that ye me throwe þus in ruyne,
 It in me shall be founde to that y day:
 Mi trowth, as fresshly newe forto be sene
 As y it had bigonne yestirday; 5455
 But, and it myght like yow to putt away
 Yowre daunger and mystrust þat grevith me,
 I shulde be bound to yow for onys and ay,
 That cause me to mystrust ye shal not se.

Though that my wordis be not ovir gay 5460
 They ben yseid with as trew fantase
 As thei say whiche make more fresshe aray,
 The change of yowre mystrust if y myght se. f 127r
No French

B89

 Good swet hert, my ioy and sovl plesaunce,
 Which y most drede and loue as y best kan 5465
 And lothist were to doon yow displesaunce,
 Ne were it so lo that y stond the man
 The which that hath, fro tyme syn y bigan,
 Endewrid more then y kan say of payne

5444–47 Both foul and beast are tamed by words. The spirit [of man] (also compelled by words) proves the truth of a thing that men can hardly imagine: speech pierces [reaches into] heaven—there is no denying it
 5449–50 I can be trusted in no way, so too-untrue you think me . . .
 5459 so that you will not see any cause to distrust me
 5462 as they [those suitors] say who present more vigorous displays [i.e., better poems/letters]
 5467–68 were it not so that I stand [here as] the man who has, from the time I began [to love]

(As shewith bi my colour, pale and wan) 5470
That giltles sleth me yowre disdayne,

And savyng ye that noon may shape myn ese
Nought wolde y say yow how it grevith me,
But nedis must y vtir my diseise
Or ellis forswelt and in suche paynes be, 5475
Wherfor, if so ye list not on me se,
Or yow ennoy with my servise playne,
Vpon yowre promys yet remembre ye
Which giltles sle me thus with yowre disdayne.

How seme ye? als, is hit resonable 5480
Me forto hate, that y yow loue and serve?
Me thinkith it were to yow more honourable
Me to rewarde in liche as y deserue
Then wilfully to do yowre servaunt sterue.
Yowre crewel daunger, good dere hert, restrayne, 5485
And lete pite yowre marbil hert enkerue
Or that giltles sle me with yowre disdayne.

Fayre Valentyne, remembre on yowre hest 5490
Lete me not fynde yowre word & thouzt as twayne.
If y myssay me, pardone, at the lest, 5490
For evyn giltles me sleth yowre disdayne.

No French

B90

Constraynt of payne, pouzt, & hevynes
Ay to pursewe the sewt of my servise
Me doth enforse to sett my bisynes
To write to yow (bi which y in sum wise 5495
Myght knowe the fyn only of myn emprise),
Which with myn eyen seme that y loue on

5471-72 so that your disdain slays me [though I am] guiltless, and [were it not that (5467)] except for you no one can comfort me [see note]

5477 or if you feel annoyed with my sincere service

5481 . . . I who love and serve you?

5487 lest you slay me undeservedly with your disdain

As fleshely soft as man nede to devise,
That in my resoun fynde yow hard as stoon.

As hard, ye, and yet more hard, parde! 5500
For man may se the tendir drope of rayne
Perse the stoon in fallyng quantite,
But for no thing that y kan write or sayne,
In lengthe of tyme thus dewryng, or complayne
Kan y not ioyne yowre hert and myn in on, 5505
Wherfore y may reherse yow here agayne
That yow y fynde more hard than eny ston.

The gret kerver, the prince Pigmalioun,
Karfe in stoon so quykly a figure 5510
The bewte of which so raught him his resoun
That he hir lovid so hoot out of mesure
To that she turnyd a fleshely creature,
So oft he prayde to God and hir aloon;
But ye—the whiche seme fleshely of nature— f 128r
For ought y pray, y fynde yow but a stoon! 5515

☉ marbil hert—more hard, if harder be!—
If so that ye be made of flesshe and boon,
As with yowre word sumwhat comfortith me
That y may fynde yow softer then a stoon.

No French

ALlas! how euyr kouthe þe God of Kynde B91
A body shape so fayre and so goodly 5520
And in it sett so hard an hert vnkynde?
He synnyd gret, in myn entent, trewly,
Without he amende yow in yowre party;
And, parde, though ye sle me in this wise, 5525
As bi my deth, ye wyne right nought therby,
Where bi my lijf ye wyne may my servise.

5502 pierce the stone in falling quantity [of drops, i.e., when they fall repeatedly]
5525–27 . . . though you slay me this way, you gain absolutely nothing by my
death, whereas by letting me live you may gain my service

To sle yowre man ye wayfe als womanhed,
 Which of the hert and al are hool lady.
 To ben a morderesse, fy on that dede! 5530
 For this report wold fle: that pitously
 Yowre servaunt deth ye contryve crewelly!
 Lo thus the shame of yow shal vprise.
 This, by my deth, is all ye get hardily,
 Where, bi my lijf, ye wynne may my servise. 5535

What may y more, with tery eyen twayne?
 I yow requere that ye of gentiles
 As meke yowre silf and ley aside disdayne
 And shewe to me yowre pite and kyndenes, f 128v
 The which that hool am yowris more & les. 5540
 Bi God and bi my trouthe this oth is twice,
 For, bi my deth, ye wynne not as y gesse,
 Where, bi my lijf, ye wynne may my servise.

Go, litill bill, Crist sende thee bettir grace
 Then wolde some whiche haue of me no price, 5545
 Yet, bi my deth, thei wynne not in no case,
 Where, bi my lijf, ye wynne may my servise.

No French

B92

The plesaunt lemys of yowre eyen clere
 Mi hert it hath so persid in euery vayne
 O furlong way that y in no manere 5550
 When y am sovl as kan me not restrayne
 As to complayne ageyne, and who so playne
 And kan not sett his cause and reson whi
 Hit may ben rettid foly gret, certayne,
 But causeles to complayne, it am not y. 5555

☉ cause is this (so hit yow not displese):
 <As> when y come to yow in eny where

5529 "Which" refers to the lady.

5534 "This" refers back to "shame."

5550-51 . . . that when I am alone I can not for a minute keep in any way from

To purchase sumwhat to myn hertis ese,
 Anoon ye yow withdrawe for verri fere
 Right even as that a Gobelyne as y were, 5560
 But, as for that, ne dowte yow not hardely,
 For y am noon, nor crewell worme, nor bere!
 Thus causeles lo compleyntoure am not y.

An othir cause which y fynde lo as this: f 129r
 Is that y stonde more ferthir from yowre grace 5565
 And lesse sett bi then he that straunger is
 That hath to yow no servise in suche case
 As that haue y, but loue forto purchase
 Bihoueth not ayen if oon therbi
 Shall lese the chere the which þe straunger hase, 5570
 Thus causeles lo compleyntoure am not y.

Iwolde as now y had not tolden yow
 Mi loue; then had y ben in company
 With yow, so right as ben othir now—
 Lo, thus complayntoure causeles am not y. 5575
No French

This long dilay, this hope without comfort
 That for yowre loue ye do me þis endure
 Myn hert forplungith so in discomfort
 That here onlyue as nys ther creature
 Which outward shewith so smal discomforture 5580
 As that y do, and fele so gret a payne,
 The which in me as holdith no mesure,
 But for eche weele a thousand woo agayne.

My weele is this: when y to yow resort
 And do biholde yowre bewte and figure, 5585

5568–70 . . . but to gain love does not benefit [the lover] in return if one [i.e., the lover] thereby loses the welcome that [even] the stranger gets
 5574 . . . just as others are now—
 5577 that you cause me thus to endure for your love

Me thynkith how ye and y then, in a sort,
 Without moo myght suffise, y yow ensewre;
 But woo is me at departure
 When y remembre yowre disdayne—
 This is my fatall fate and my mysvre.
 As now in wele and now in woo agayne.

f 129v

Agayne, when y bithynke yowre goodly port,
 Yowre witty yowthe, yowre demene and norture,
 Of whiche y wele here many may report,
 I then enioy the crese of yowre honure;
 But me is woo to thynke how that vnsure
 I stonde where that y shall yowre grace attayne.
 Twene hope and drede thus stonde y in aventure,
 As now in wele and eft in woo agayne.

5595

Now, good swet hert, biholdith pis scripture
 And fynde a bettir moyan for vs twayne,
 Bi whiche that y may chaungen this meture
 As now in wele and now in woo agayne.

5600

No French

B94



Goodly fayre, sith y haue doon & shall
 Bandyd my silf, myn hert, & my seruice

5605

To yow, to don in any poynt at all
 With hit right so as ye list best devise,
 I yow biseche in my most humbill wise
 As for my loue sumwhat of yowre agayne,
 And syn yowre bewte causith this emprise,
 O good swete hert, haue me not in disdayne.

5610

Oure Lord comaundith how eche creature
 Shulde doon to othir in the self manere

5586–87 It seems to me that you and I together, then, could meet [each other's] desires if we were alone . . .

5597 . . . whether I will be able to obtain your favor

5603 which is now . . .


5608–9 I beg you . . . for the love I have given you some of yours in return


As he wolde he did him. Lo this scripture
 I yow reherse that ye shulde my desere f 130r
 Fulfille liche as ye wolde that yowre plesere
 Shulde folowid ben where as ye wolde most fayne;
 This, for my loue, yowre loue y yow requere.
 O good swet hert, haue me not in disdayne.

Thus forto lengthe yowre grace forth day bi day 5620
 Ye nor yet y therwith prevaylid be
 And savyng yowre displeasere als, ma fay,
 Ye are vnkynde als, as semeth me,
 To shewe me favoure lesse then ye
 Do vnto hem which ye knowe, soth to sayne, 5625
 Is not yowre servaunt; lo all this y see.
 O good swet hert, haue me not in disdayne.

If y myssay, pardone myn vnkonyng,
 For y here song—all synge y not nor fayne—
 How loue for loue is skilful gardonyng. 5630
 O good swet hert, haue me not in disdayne!
No French

B95

 Pressid with thought, langoure, & hevynes,
 Forcast in woo and all forwrappid in payne
 As half dispeyrid that ye, my fayre maystres,
 As willith nought y shall yowre grace attayne, 5635
 And if þat ye so done, then mowe ye saine
 Me wherto y shal trusten at þe lest;
 As weele or woo the toon me to ordeyne.
 To knowe the fyne—lo þis is my request.

 praty on, now thynkith what distresse f 130v

5620 Thus to keep withholding [putting off the granting of] your favor . . .

5622 and also with due consideration of your displeasure [at what I am about to say] . . .

5629 for I hear it said—though I do not say so nor [did I] make it up—[that]

5636–38 and if you would be so kind [as to show mercy to me], then you ought to tell me what I should hope for in the end; arrange (for me) weal or woe, one or the other.

It is to loue and not be louyd agayne,
 And synnes ye mowe the greef in me alesse,
 For loue of Loue, ne takith no disdayne
 Of oon hert paynyd to shape a ioyfull twayne
 Then suche greef to eniape, is this honest? 5645
 The cause it is y write yow here so playne:
 To knowe the fyne—lo this is my request.

What may me ese it nedith not expresse,
 Ye wot also whereso y fraude or fayne.
 What nedith me thenne as forto make excesse? 5650
 Hit oft here to reherse were but in vayne.
 Of myn entent syn ye knowe the certayne
 (Though y vnworthi be to suche a fest
 Only, without yowre grace, myn owen souerayne),
 To knowe the fyne—lo this is my request. 5655

Hit is a nyce drede yow doth refrayne
 To kepe yowre pite thus vndir arest.
 O mercy, swete! lete me no more complayne!
 To knowe the fyne, lo, this is my request.

No French

B96

Syn hit is so we nedis must depart 5660
 And when to mete þe tyme <is> nouncertayne,
 Even to myn hert hit is as Dethis dart
 The which, allas! me sleth for verry payne;
 But syn so is Infortune lust ordayne
 Suche fatall fate (Wo worth the destene!) 5665
 I yow biseche, to that we mete agayne,
 As take myn hert and lete yowris bide with me. f 131r

For most ynly myn hert as doth desire
 To serven yow, ay beyng in yowre sight,
 Withouten part of othir wage or hire, 5670
 And y as moche agayne wille, if y myght,
 Yowre hert tofore the hert of any wight,

To haue with me—all be y not worthe—
 To eft we mete. Now, good, this stevyne plight:
 As take myn hert and lete yowre bide with me.

5675

Myn hert of right must cause yow on me pinke
 And to revolve the trouthe of my servise
 And, as for yowre, all wake y, slepe, or wynke,
 Yet must me doo to like myn entirprise
 And more to take in gree myn owen Iewis
 To do me thynke yowre goodnes and bewte,
 And, syn it is to yow no preiudice,
 As take myn hert and lete yowre bide with me;

5680

Thus mowe ye lo enese me gretly
 (And in no wise yowre honoure lessid be),
 Wherfore y yow biseche even hertily,
 As take myn hert and lete yowre bide with me.

5685

Epistle

Myn only ioy, my lady and maystres,
 Whiche are the hope of all my worldis wele,
 Withouten whom þat plesere nor gladnes
 As may me helpe, god wot, right neuyr a dele,
 So that it lust yow witen of myn hele,
 A noyous lijf y lede in gret turment
 And so endewre it to my caris felle
 Only bicause y am from yow absent.

5690

f 131v

5695

But what, allas! yet haue y remembraunce
 As where and how y last did on yow se,
 Vnto my ioy and parfit gret plesaunce,
 That trewly lo yet this bithought y me:
 That neuyr turment nor aduersite
 As from that tyme myght proche vnto myn hert,

5700

5674 . . . swear to [be bound by] this agreement

5678–81 and, as for your heart, whether I wake, sleep, or doze, yet [it] will cause me to be pleased with my undertaking and what is more to take in good part my sentence by causing me to think on your goodness and beauty

5692 if it please you to know the state of my general welfare

5694 . . . to my intensely painful sorrow

But othir wise y fond it wel, parde,
When y departid yow, vnto my smert.

For when y came to take of yow my leue,
How were me best y koude it not asprien, 5705
On which on first to wayte or to benleue:
Vnto myn hert or ellis vnto myn eyen,
As in extreme thus fond y hem to deyen.
So gan myn hert in sorow sikis rore
That neuyr him tofore þat had y seien 5710
From recomfort <so fer> my lijf <tofore>.

The tothir side, myn eyen als þei ware
In so fervent a welle sett of wepyng
That vnnethe, allas, they koude hit spare,
Nor durst for drede benholde oo sely þing, 5715
Lest thorough only a lokis mysgidyng
That they were tane of insuspecioun
Which servith oft to doon a sclaudir spryng
In a ielous, cursid opynyoun. f 132r

And thus (what!) for the fere y had and drede 5720
Lest thorough them my sorow were biwried,
Not wist y which vntend, yn verri ded,
For so dismayd in all þis world so wide
Was y, nor so in woo forcast aside,
For, parde lo hit nedith not ben sore 5725
That rathir then y shulde haue ben aspide
Me levyr nad as ben to lijf ybore.

For if y hadde bi fonnyd look or chere
Outshewid how y loue yow lo and shal
As bi defaut in my rewde manere, 5730
Thorough which þer myght onto yow so benfall

5705–6 how I could best [go about it] I could not figure out, which one to wait on [care for] first or [which one] to leave alone

5710–11 that I had never before seen him so far from comfort in my life. “Tofore” (5711) is redundant.

5716 . . . the straying of a glance

5719 in an envious, malicious rumor

On only poynt (all were it not but small)
 In which ye had dishonoure so or blame,
 Nad y me nede of sorow more to call,
 For all my lijf y waylen shulde þe same. 5735

This stode it me, and werse, myn aventure
 At tyme when þat y partid yow away
 Vnhauyng spase vnto yow to <diskewre>
 What payne departyng did vnto me lay.
 But what, dere hert, may y vnto yow say, 5740
 Saue (thynkith, swet, and beth no þing agast)
 That y yow loue and serve shall to y day
 Without departyng while lijf doth me last.

And when þat ferful Deth as doth me sterve,
 Whom ay to flee me botith in no wise, f 132v
 Yet with my sowle, parde, y shal yow serue
 To pray for yow an high in paradice,
 If that hit grace me as y do devise;
 And for my good, myn hert, and pore chest,
 I leue hem yow all hool in yowre fraunchise 5750
 To don with hit right as yow semeth best.

For, savyng ye, <nenyther> noon, dowltes,
 Whom that y calle (nor oft to do yet, noo)
 Myn "only lady" ne "sowl maystres,"
 For if y did, god wot, y gabbid so. 5755
 So bicame y yowris in wele or woo
 The silf first tyme y lokid yowre bewte
 Which so hath fosterid me þat, where y goo,
 To serve yow trewly nede y must ben he.

So lustith yow of mercy to bithynke 5760
 What woo y hadde the selfe tyme, allas!
 That loue yow most, all wake y, slepe, or wynke,
 And eek þe more agre my wrecchid cas

5738 not having the opportunity to make known to you

5749 and as for my goods . . .

5752 . . . there is no one . . .


Syn so to go agayne my wille it was
 (Which doth me greue more then y kan endyte) 5765
 That now to se me wante[b] þus þe grace
 Yowre swete visage and fayre, round pappis white,

Yowre sidis streight and armys to, þe same
 Whiche fayne y se wolde, to my gret pleseris,
 That are my good and my most fayre madame, 5770
 Eche feture als accordyng so and cheris
 Whiche are to me so swyft messangeris f 133r
 That fro me fecche they, be y fer or nere,
 All hool my will to serue yow and deseris,
 As spede me god in this and eche matere, 5775

Bisechyng yow right thus, most goodly fayre,
 Forto bithynke me though y ben away,
 For where so Fortune do me to repayre,
 I am yowre man and shal be to y day,
 And that y promyse yow, bi my good fay, 5780
 So am y yowris all for euyrmore.
 I trust to God to doon so, and y may,
 That y shall ben rewardid wel therfore.

Ch. 265–68, Complainte III

B97

 Sely Ankir, that in thi selle
 Iclosid art with stoon and gost not out, 5785
 Thou maist ben gladder so forto dwelle
 Then y with wanton wandryng þus about
 That haue me pikid amongis þe rowt
 An endles woo withouten recomfort,
 That of my poore lijf y stonde in dowl. 5790
 Go, dul complaynt, my lady þis report.

The anker hath no more him forto greue
 Then sool alone vpon the wallis stare,

5766 that now I lack the good fortune of seeing
 5768 [I] also [lack sight of] your straight sides and arms
 5771 each feature, too, so harmonious, and gestures

But, welaway, y stonde in more myscheef,
 For he hath helthe and y of helthe am bare, 5795
 And more and more when y come where þer are
 Of fayre folkis to se a goodly sort—
 A thousand fold that doth encrease my care. f 133v
 Go, dull complaynt, my lady þis report.

It doth me thynke, “Yondir is fayre of face, 5800
 But, what, more fayre yet is my ladi dere.
 Yond on is small, and yonde streight sidis has;
 Her foot is lite, and she hath eyen clere,
 But all ther staynyd my lady, were she here.”
 Thus thynke y, lo, which doth me discomfort, 5805
 Not for the sight but for y nare hir nere.
 Go, dull complaynt, my lady þis report.

Wo worthe them which þat raft me hir presence!
 Wo worth the tyme to y to hir resort!
 Wo worthis me to be thus in absence! 5810
 Go, dull complaynt, my lady þis report!
No French

Welcome, my ioy! Welcome, myn hertis ese!
 Welcome, my lady! Welcome, my plesaunce!
 Welcome, my sovl comfort in all disese!
 Welcome, enlesser of my gret grevaunce! 5815
 Welcome, of ricchesse myn hool suffisaunce!
 Welcome, the heuene y most desire to haue!
 Welcome, whiche haue my lijf in gouernaunce!
 Welcome, my leche, me forto sle or saue!

Right as yowre absence was to me an hele, 5820
 Right so yowre presence is to me a blis.
 Even as þe sight of yow me geueth wele,
 Even so y payne when sight of yow y mys. f 134r

5796 and that is intensified when . . .

5804 but my lady, were she here, would eclipse all [who were] there

5806 . . . but because I am not near her

A thousand sithe y wisshid haue or þis
 (A thowsand sythe on row!) that ye wer arave, 5825
 But welcome, now, to mende þat is amys,
 And welcome now, my leche, to sle or saue!

Now, good swet hert, as this remembre yow:
 How longe apart we were þorough infortune.
 Now, good swet hert, wherfore bithynke as how 5830
 How longe we mowe as in þis ioy contune,
 For all in yow hit lith as my fortune.
 Welcome! what ye me geve y not disprave,
 For all my myrthe ye mate may or entewne.
 Welcome no more, but now me sle or saue! 5835

What may y more yow write at wordis fewe?
 The ioy of yow welnygh me doth [to] rae!
 Welcome as oft as tonge kan say on rewe!
 Welcome no more—but now me sle or saue!
No French

B99

With axesse shake, forsekid, & forfaynt, 5840
 The poore karkes so enfeblisshid is,
 The hert in woo forswelt and so attaynt
 That even a deth it is to lyue as þis;
 The gost dispeyrid lo so in me þer ныs
 The body, hert, or gost in any ese, 5845
 But all my wele, so helpe me god as wis,
 In his avmferse me turnyth in disese.

f For all my ioy is turnyd to hevynes,
 Myn ese in harme, my wele in woo, f 134v
 Mi hope in drede, in dowl my sikirnes, 5850
 And my delite in sorow loo,

5825 . . . that you had arrived

5833–35 . . . what you give me I do not despise, for you may destroy all my joy or bring it into tune. Now enough [of these welcomes], . . . !

5840 Shaken with lovesickness, made deathly ill, and (absolutely) exhausted

5844–45 The spirit in me [is] in such despair that there is no ease at all [in my] body, heart, or spirit

My hele seeknes, and ovirmoo,
 As euery thing that shulde me plesse
 Iturnyd is (god helpe me soo!)
 In his amverse, to my disese.

5855

For who with Sorowe list aqueyntid be,
 As come to me and spille no ferthir wey,
 For Sorow is y and y am he
 For euery ioy in me is goon away.
 Allas! what wight as may ther write or say
 That hath of sorowe more þen y to lese,
 Syn euery wele in me so (welaway!)
 In his amverse [is] tornyd to disese.

5860

Now, good dere hert, me nedith not say yow how
 That ye þe langoure mowe in me appese;
 If ye good list, ye konne do well ynow
 In the amverse to turne all my disese.

5865

No French

THer nys in me comfort of gladnes
 Nor in myn hert ioye or parfit wele,
 So is my swete retournyd in bittirnes
 Mi good, in harme; my blisse is woxen helle—
 The greet and cause of þis y shall yow telle
 (Wo worth the doer!): loo, my greef it is
 That ye with me nor y with yow may dele
 But wikkid folke therof muste say amys!

B100

5870

f 135r

Who is the cause herof then? is hit ye?
 Ye? nay, it is my freel hert!
 Hert? nay, my fonnyd loue, parde!
 Loue? nay, my rakill lookis stert!
 Lokis? nay, for this y may aduert:

5880

5852 my health [into] sickness, and in addition

5857 . . . and do not bother to search for other means

5861 that [he] has more sorrow . . .


5879 . . . the rash impetuosity of my glances!

That ther nys noon kan do so wel, ywis,
 But false tongis in sugre terme covert
 Of wikkid folke therof wol say amys!

But maugre them—lo this y yow ensure:
 Not maugre, but in spite—y shal yow serue. 5885
 —Not only serue, but loue while y endewre.
 —Not only loue, but drede to that y sterue.
 —Not only drede, but alle thre to deserue
 Yowre thank. Deserue? my lijf may not in þis,
 But for this dome to yow y hit reserue 5890
 In spite of alle þat lust to say amys!

But this is best, to myn entent, trewly:
 That we fulfille right as þei deme it is,
 Then shal we gete oure plesure yet therby,
 In spite of alle þat lust to say amys! 5895
No French

B101

 Fayre madame, if so ye dare not loo
 On lovyng basse as forto geven me
 For drede that ye shulde wrethyn Daunger so,
 (That alway is so full of crewelte),
 I shall right well lo stele a, two, or thre, f 135v
 If ye therwith as take no displesere,
 And lust so moche to pley to my desire,
 In spite of Daunger and his affynyte.

Forto venquysshe this karle, my crewel foo,
 God wot how desirous y to hit be, 5905
 —So that ther wiste but ye and y, no moo—
 That demeth ay so yvill (yvill mot he thee!)
 And doth me langoure in aduersite

5881–82 there is surely no one who can convey glances so well but that false tongues . . .

5888–89 . . . but [do] all three [serve, love, revere] to deserve your thanks. Deserve? my lifetime is not enough in this respect

5893 that we do what they suspect us of doing

5902 and [you] wish in this to fulfill my desire

When þat y ellis shulde be in gret plesere,
 But ye myght well amende all þis matere 5910
 In spite of Daunger and his affynyte.

When he thynkith he may most sewrist go,
 A secret hert that trewe is and happy
 Wolde gete to him as swyft as any roo
 Of lovis folke a frendly company, 5915
 Disgisid vndir shame to that thei see
 Where þei aslepe myght take þis false Daungere,
 That then Plesaunce may do his hool plesere
 In spite of Daungere and his affynyte.

Wel ought thei haue rewardis grete, parde, 5920
 That so frendly kan deserue her hyre
 And fynde therto a space of suche leysere
 In spite of Daungere and his affynyte.

Ch. 93, B LXVIII

J Yelde my silf to yow! Saue me my lijf! 5925
 And, stede of good, fynauce my poor hert,
 Whiche am discomfit þorough þese paynys rive
 That me assawt of rage and grefis smert.
 Allas, madame, me thynke if ye aduert
 The long service þat y haue to yow ought,
 Me semeth lo hit hath my lijf desert, 5930
 If euyr well ye were on loue bithought.

What trobill ist y haue in yowre servise!
 As first, þorough loue, in willyng yowre mercy
 And then agayne, what daunger on hit lise
 Of Cursid Speche, of Sclaundir and Envy 5935
 That nyght and day me warith crewelly

5918 so that then Plesaunce . . .

5925 and, instead of goods, [take] my unworthy heart [and] hold [it] for ransom [i.e., accept it as hostage]

5930 it seems to me that it has merited [the saving of] my life

5934–35 . . . what risk of Cursed Speech . . . lies in it [your service]

And han me lo fro ioy to sorow brought,
 And yet y gesse ye wot ther nys not whi
 If evir well ye were on loue bithought.

The long dilay, the hope without comfort 5940
 Ye don me dewre, allas! þe harde stounde!
 Nysther pite that to yow lust resort?
 Growth ther so small in yow? kan noon be founde?
 Me thynke ye nolde not for a thousand pounce
 For trouthe him slee þat hit <disservith> nought, 5945
 Whiche knowe my hele and how forto confound,
 If evir well ye were on loue bithought.

Not half þis speche nor sclaudir shulde þer go
 Had y yowre grace, all þing shulde so be wrou3t,
 Wherefore to sone ye kan not don hit, no, 5950
 If evir wel ye were on loue bithought.

No French

B103

Hert, more hard then roche of any stoon, 5955
 How nys it ye haue on my poore herte pite?
 Is <Piti> from yow goon? and whidir goon?
 Or is she ded? allas! how may it be
 That for my loue ye shewe me crewelte?
 Who hath ther sene, out rowthe, so goodly wight?
 Allas the while, to say y shulde ben he
 That trouthe may not rewarde me in my right!

Nys my service redi to yow in oon 5960
 In what ye lust forto comaunden me?
 Seme ye hit right to don me lyue aloon,
 Owt any welthe in suche aduersite?
 Me thynke y haue vnto my poor degre

5946 [You] who know how to cure me and how to destroy [me]

5948–50 If I had your grace [to dispense], everything would be arranged so that not half this amount of speech [on my part] or suspicion would be necessary, so [given this], you cannot act too quickly, no

5957 Who has seen such a beautiful creature [who was] without pity?

5963 without any joy . . .

Yowre thank deserue[d], if y deserue it myght. 5965
 Allas the while, to say y shulde ben he
 That trouthe may not rewarde me in my right!

My bolnyd hert, wel may he sighe and grone
 And wayle his cursid fate and destyne,
 That ye, allas, vnto my karfull mone 5970
 Not dayneth ones a regard on to see!
 O fy, madame! ye seyne to moche, parde,
 To lette disdayne of bounte stoppe the light!
 Allas the while, to say y shulde ben he
 That trouthe may not rewarde me in my right! 5975

Ther nys no more but—and y be worthe—
 To haue my deth, so doon hit me be dight!
 Allas þe while, to say y shulde ben he
 That trouthe may not rewarde me in my right! f 137r
No French

Yowre goodlihed, myn hertis lady dere, B104
 So thrillith me in my remembraunce, 5980
 Yowre fresshe bewte and maydenly manere,
 Yowre swete fassoun with all þe circumstaunce,
 That y yow kan not putt in oblyaunce,
 Nor, though y wolde, withdrawe from yowre servise 5985
 But wilfully agree with my penaunce
 To hit like yow enjoy me in sum wise.

But as the moth doth, bi þe candil fyre
 Kan not eschewe þe flawmys encombraunce
 But fleth abowt ay brennyng nere and nere, 5990
 In liche fare y. Such is my fatall chaunce,
 That ay þe more y fele of my grevaunce,
 The more desire y in myn entirprise,

5971–73 do not deign once to cast a glance at me . . . you attempt too much [i.e., go too far] . . . in letting [your] disdain stop the light of bounty
 5977 to die, so cause it [my death] to be readied for me!
 5983 . . . in all its details

Twene hope and drede þus lyvyng in a traunce
To hit like yow enjoy me in sum wise. 5995

Ther are but foolis twayne, as wil ye here:
The first is he which felith ennoyauce
And hem forto withdrawe ne list not lere;
The tothir is he which lyvith in plesaunce
And wilfully withdrawith in substaunce. 6000
The first am y of alle—and kan not rise—
In payne loo þus bi fonnyd gouernaunce
To hit like yow enjoy me in sum wise.

But to yowre grace if ye me lust avaunce, f 137v
All shul ye see, y shall me bet advise 6005
Then forto fonne in þe secunde daunce
If it like yow enjoy me in sum wise.

No French

B105

J, Wrecche, fulfillid of þou3t and hevynes,
Though þat y wolde—allas! how my3t it be?—
To speke or write which sowneþ to gladnes, 6010
Syn that ther nys as will nor ioy in me,
But clene biraught me thorough yowre cruelte;
Nevirtheles y truste ye do it borow,
For plegge ye left me in ther company:
Woo for eche wille and for eche ioy a sorow. 6015

But though ye lust it kepe for yowre plesere
As for a tyme, y this bisechen yow:
That as sone as ye see good leysere,
To sende it me, for (in good feith) as now
I may hit yvill forbere and, wite ye how, 6020
As for yowre plegge, not rekke y þou3 tomorow

6001 . . . —and can not rise up [out of my foolishness]—

6009–14 though I would like to speak or write that which tends toward happiness, alas! how can I, since there is neither weal nor joy in me, but you have bereft me [of it] through your cruelty; nevertheless I trust you have only borrowed [joy and weal from me], for in their place you left me as a pledge

Ye sende for hit, so that agayne y mowe
As haue my weele for woo and ioy for sorow.

And for yowre plegge, hit may gretly prevayle
Vnto yowre fooes as, in myn entent, 6025
I wolde, if ye lust do bi my counsayle,
That bi a dede of yeft hit be <hem> sent
And—go they to the devill or forth to Kent—
Kare not for them, nor for þer tungis horror,
For bett it is on them then on me spent, f 138r
As woo for weele and for ioy sorowe.

And if þat ye wol holde me fro my wille
I yow appele to God, which all arowe
Wot how it is bitwene vs euery dele—
Of all my wille, my woo, ioy, and sorowe. 6035

No French

B106

MY paynyd gost enforsith me complayne
On Loue and, swete foo, on yowre crewelte,
The which giltles me sleeth for verry payne,
But, what, myn hert is most to blame, parde,
To do me loue þe which þat willith me 6040
Mi deth, and þis Loue cast to reue my lijf,
Vnto þe whiche myn hert as doth agree.
Thus pitously my deth ye <do contryve>!

Gretly offendith als myn eyen tweyne,
For ther nys hert which kan eschewe or flee 6045
To loue þat seth þe bewte in yow souereyne,
The goodlihed, þe gentiles and bounte,
But when þe hert causith the eyen <see>

6024–25 And as for your pledge, it may prevail greatly against your foes . . .

6038 who slays me, undeservedly, in extreme anguish

6040–42 to cause me to love the one who desires my death, and thus Love plans to rob [me of] my life, unto which [plan] my heart consents

6045–46 for no heart exists that can avoid or flee from love when it sees your supreme beauty

And there biholde, þe hert to loue as ryve,
 The offence of bothe dissent on my parte. 6050
 Thus pitously my deth ye do contryve!

As for my service spent þus all in vayne,
 Rebuke and skorne is payment of my fee!
 But pite is, allas! trouthe may not rayne,
 For where ye ought of right my frendis be f 138v
 Ye moost are cause of myn aduersite
 For this in yow ne holt þat now as blyve
 I were but deed as thorough yowre crewelte.
 Thus pitously my deth ye do contryve!

Lo, thus in payne me wrappith Loue & ye 6060
 That half my woo y kan it not discryve—
 Myn hert also, with castis of myn eye.
 Thus pitously my deth ye do contryve
Ch. 92, B LXVII

B107

MI woful hert þat slepis lo in care,
 Awake! arise! <awake> þe lustily! 6065
 Forwhi as this y do thee to beware
 That, as me thynke, shulde plesen þee gretly,
 Forwhi, for trouthe, þis wot thou verily:
 How þat a lady of right gret astate
 And wel renomyd also, wote þou what, 6070
 As only this to bie the dooth desere,
 Whiche bargeyne glad y gre, as haue y grace,
 For this, for þe, hir hert she gevith me clere
 Without departyng all hir lyvis space!

6049–50 . . . the heart being eager to love, the offence of both falls on me
 6055 for whereas you [heart and eyes] surely ought to be my friends
 6060 Lo, thus you and Love wrap me in pain
 6062 my heart also [makes me suffer], together with the glances of my eyes
 6066–67 because I [want to] inform you of something that . . . should please you
 greatly
 6071 just this: desires to buy you
 6073 for thus, in exchange for you . . .

Reuse this chaunge and refuse my welfare! 6075
 Forwhi therto y gre me right gladly,
 Wherefore y charge the this, wher so þou are,
 As straytly as y kan, þat to þou dy
 To doon thi servise to hir humbly
 <Out> Ielowsy in stryvyng or debat 6080
 And that alway, be it erly or late, f 139r
 Holde company with my good lady dere
 With all þe power þat good will in þe hase,
 For as heron y gefe thee to hir here
 Without departyng all my lyvis space. 6085

Go thou þi way, logge in þe fresshe manar
 Of the body of hir so ingoodly,
 Alway to dwelle, þough y be here or whare,
 And honoure hir well—more then hit were y!—
 Which hath comaundid of hir curtesy 6090
 That thou shalt be (so blisfull is þi fate!)
 As of hir hert hir leef tenaunt therat,
 Where þou shalt lyue in more ioy and plesere
 On day with hir then here a thousand brase,
 So loke deserue it vnto thi poore powere, 6095
 Without departyng all thy lyvis space.

Now fare wel, hert, attonys y wolde þou were
 With hir, alak! so drede y hir manase!
 And say þat y am heris fer and nere
 Without departyng all my lyvis space. 6100

No French

B108
Half in dispeyre—not half, but clene dispeyrid,
 I take my leue of Loue for onys and ay,
 And of his seitfull, sotill hestis fayrid
 The whiche þat spoken are as playn as þay
 Wherin þe hert right as þe tonge say, 6105

6089 . . . —more than if it were I!—

6094–95 one day with her than twice a thousand days here [with me], so endeavor to deserve . . .

But y haue founde hem alle an opir wise,
 The whiche y may biwayle, so welaway
 That euyr y knew Loue or his servise! f 139v

I wot not whi nor kan well vndirstonde
 Wherefore such promys are ymade and sworne,
 Without it be to holden folk on honde 6110
 And prately then to gyve hem so an horne.
 But what, y say as y haue seid toforne,
 Syn that y faylid haue of myn emprise:
 As, welaway! þat syn þat y was borne 6115
 That evyr y knew Loue or his servise!

I kast not eft my sewrete put in drede.
 Lete othir say, for y haue doon for me,
 Notwithstandyng y sory am in dede
 That for so small a cause hit shulde so be, 6120
 But "at a litill hole day mowe we see."
 "He louith lite," als may y wel avise,
 "That hatith for nought." Allas! þat y am he
 That evir knew Loue or his servise!

But what, as this, almyghti God y pray 6125
 That no trewe man be vexid in such wise
 As y haue bene, for whiche "allas!" y say,
 "That evir y knew Loue or his servise!"

No French

Epistle

With hert repentaunt of my gret offence,
 I me recomaunde in eche humbil wise 6130
 Vnto yow lo þe whiche as recompense
 Hit makith noon, þat kan y wel avise, 6131-34
 Vnto my gilt, but, what, I seinys wise f 140r

6107 for which reason I may complain . . .

6117 I do not intend to put my pledge [i.e., my heart] in jeopardy again

6131-34 . . . which [repentance] does not make recompense . . . for my guilt, but . . . [anyway] I have already repented twice . . .

Repentid haue of þat y haue mysbore
And sory ben—alak! what may y more? 6135

But what, in haste ye did vnto me write
And so in wikkid hast y wrot agayne,
But this, as lo, me mevid so endite
That in my silf þis thought y, in certayne,
Ye so were causid write, þis dare y sayne, 6140
And ellis ye nolde haue doon so fowle a dede
Without offence vnto yowre womanhede.

Offence? Nay, þe offence hit is in me!
For what, as loo, y ought me well content
In what ye say, so hit yowre plesere be, 6145
The which þe amverse took in myn entent,
I, crewell, lo, and ye, to pacient
Me to rebewke as of my gret outrage
And squaryng of my ruggid, fowle langage.

But vnto whom shal y for mercy cry? 6150
Vnto yow? nay, my gilt is so, ywis,
And if y othir moyan make, þen y
Shall fynde ynowe to kepe it as it is,
And passyng fewe to mende þat is amys.
Thus wot y not as how my silf amende, 6155
But stonde as redles at my wittis ende.

And though so be ye lust me haue in hate,
Right as y wot y haue deseruyd so, f 140v
Vnto my laste y shall yow loue algate
In any wise, do ye me wele or woo, 6160
But neuyrtheles if þat my fortune lo
Might gete yowre grace, hit were me such [a] store
That y shulde neuyr aftir lese it more.

6146 [I] who adopted the opposite [of patience, i.e., cruelty] . . .

6152–54 and if I ask for help from someone else, I shall find many who would wish to keep things as they are and precious few who would [attempt to] patch up that which has gone wrong

6160 no matter how you act, whether you cause me pleasure or pain

And for my gilt, if y no grace deserue,
 Nor that ye lust no more take on me hede, 6165
 Yet in reward of þat y wil yow serue.
 Say not of me but as ye knowe in dede,
 And y shal yow þe same, so god me spede,
 And wille yow wele wher ye me wil or no,
 And fare yow well! thus ende y now as loo. 6170
No French

B109

H Adde y hertis a thousand, þouzand score,
 Alle shulde þei thanke yow, myn owen ladi dere,
 For yowre promys (ye wot what ye han swore,
 As eft agayne hit nedith not say it here)!
 Ye haue me wonne in all y haue powere, 6175
 While that y lyue, to serue yow as y kan,
 But where þat fortune gyde me fer or nere,
 Hit besse, swet hert, to me, yowre pouer man.

Q fayre, dere hert, now take me to yowre lore
 And lerne me how to do yow most plesere. 6180
 Not drede yow, swete, nor set o poynt ashore,
 And ye shall se how sone y shall hem lere.
 Fy on þe payne y had thorough fals Daungere,
 Syn that ye haue me to yowre mercy tan! f 141r
 But where þat fortune gyde me fer or nere, 6185
 Hit besse, swet hert, to me, yowre pouer man.

So wel begoon as y was neuyr bore
 Of erthely wight, nor half so glad of chere,
 For this, god wot, me thynkith evirmore:
 That eche howre hit is a thousand yere 6190
 Vnto the tyme þat we in armys were,
 Then shulde ye knowe—ye know not hit than—
 But where þat fortune gide me fer or nere
 Hit besse, swet hert, to me, yowre pouer man.

6181 . . . nor leave a single thing out

6187-88 No one as happy as I or half as joyful in spirit was ever born of earthly person

Ye wot how longe y bide may with yow here, 6195
 And vncertayne my comyng is hit whan,
 But wher so fortune gide me fer or nere
 Hit besse, swet hert, to me, yowre pouer man.
No French

Q Fayrist flowre, O flowre of flowris alle, B110
 Whos fresheli coloure meynt twene whit & red 6200
 The whiche þat y oft tymys see apalle
 Thorough shamfastnes þat ye of womanhed
 Taken yowre silf and als abasid dred
 In dowl of suche as deme, of lesse or more,
 The werst alway lo of this lijf ye lede. 6205
 What may y more? y sory am þefore;

But as for þat, hit doth yow wel enwarne
 As wot y wel. Wel? Ye, wel, parde!
 But bi my trouthe, y loth were yow enharme f 141v
 As any wight alyue, what so he be, 6210
 And if, allas! y shulde withdrawen me,
 Even as the deth hit wolde me greue sore,
 And, wonder! lo, amende y kan not see.
 What may y more? y sory am therfore.

But what, we muste as lete them forth dyvyne, 6215
 And when þei haue all seid, þen han þei doon,
 For this—A wondir last but dayes nyne—
 An oold proverbe is seid, and lo as sone
 As stoppid is ther false suspecioun.
 I yow requere, as y haue don tofore, 6220
 Yowre loue for loue and, fayle y this gardoun,
 What may y more? y sory am therfore.

6196 and [how] uncertain it [the time] of my coming is
 6204–5 for fear of those who always suspect, in all things, the worst . . .
 6207 but as for that [being judged], it makes you red [with anger]
 6209 . . . I would be [as] loath to injure you
 6215 “Them” refers to the detractors.

Where þat myn haver is right rewde, al dol,
 As pardone me, madame, my boystous lore,
 For if y kan amende it lo y wol; 6225
 If y not may, y sory am therfore.
No French

B111

Honure, ioy, helthe, and plesaunce
 Vertu, riches habundaunt with good vre
 The Lord graunt yow (which hath most puysshauce),
 And many a gladsom yere forto endure, 6230
 With loue and prays of euery creature,
 And for my loue (all prevayle it small)
 I gyve hit yow, as be ye verry sewre,
 With hert, body, my litill good, and all.

And so yow not displesse with my desire, f 142r
 This wolde y yow biseche: that of yowre grace
 Hit like yow lo to graunt me all þis yere
 As in yowre hert to haue a dwellyng place,
 Al be hit neuyr of so lite a space,
 For which as this the rente resceyue ye shall: 6240
 Mi loue and seruice as in euery case,
 With hert, body, my litill good, and all.

And syn hit is to yow no preiudice
 Sum litill, prati corner sekis me
 Within yowre hert for, parde, lo, iustice 6245
 If y offende, hit must yowre selven be
 To punyssheliche as ye þe offensis se,
 For y as name nor haue no thing at all
 But it is sovl yowre owen in eche degre,
 With hert, body, my litill good, and all. 6250

6232 and as for my love . . .

6235 And if you are not displeased with my wish

6240 in return for which . . .

6245-46 . . . for . . . if I offend (you), you must be the judge

6248-49 for I am nothing and I have nothing but that it is yours alone . . .

What so ye will, y wil hit to obey,
 For payne or smert, how so þat me bifall,
 So am y yowre and shal to that y dey
 With hert, body, my litill good, and all.

Ch. 140, B LXXXVIII, Orleans to Burgundy

Q Lo, myn hert, syn ye wol gone yowre way
 (And leue me soole) vnto my lady dere,
 Yet, for my sake, y yow requere and pray
 That when so be ye se tyme and laysere,
 Remembre here þe playnt of my matere.
 Syn that ye knowe alle my grete greffis sore.
 Me nedith not it to rehersen here.
 Ye wote my wele. What shulde y wordis more?

B112

6255

6260

f 142v

As first of alle, þis wolde y þat ye say:
 <Me> recomaundyng in eche lowe manere
 My lady to (as ye best thynke and may)
 And aftir that say hir, y yow requere,
 The woo turment y lede in displesere.
 For her departyng—set no poynt ashore!—
 Syn hir aspectis berayvith me my plesere.
 Ye wot my weele. What shulde y wordis more?

6265

6270

Now do yowre devoure, say me now not nay,
 For gyf ye do then batith all my chere,
 And sende me word bi Thought eche howre of day
 When next that ye suppose to brynge vs nere
 Vnto that swete þat lyvith withouten pere
 (Nor nevyr had—y gefe this world tofore)
 Of bewte, bounte, nor swet eyen clere.
 Ye wot my wele. What shulde y wordis more?

6275

Wot ye not wel that lijk a prisonere
 I must abide the oth þat y have swore?

6280

6255–56 . . . since you want to leave me alone and go [and stay] with my dear lady

6274–76 when you next intend to bring us [my heart and I] to that sweet [one] who has no peer (nor ever had [one])—I stake the [whole] world on it

Myn hert, y nede no more vnto yow lere.
Ye wote my wele. What shulde y wordis more?

No French

B113

WIth hert, body, and my hool puysshaunce,
I thanke yow, swete—or more, if more may be—
Of yowre goodly remembraunce 6285
The which ye oft han shewid me. f 143r
So doon with me in eche degre
What yow good lust in any thing at all,
For in no poynt excepte y nought
Nor to my deth y neuyr shall, 6290
Whatsoever be seid or thought.

forgete ye not now, in substaunce:
Ye wot what þat y myght se
Vnto my blisse and most plesaunce,
For thynke ye hit that y am he 6295
Not all out of aduersite,
Nor shall to that yowre myddil smal
Be onys within myn armys brouzt,
Nor to my deth y nevir shal,
Whatsoever be seid or thought. 6300

So shape me of hit delyueraunce
When ther are noon but y and ye
In lessyng of þe gret penaunce
I haue had thorough þe crewelte
Of Daungere and of Ielowsy 6305
That yvil thrift on þer chekis falle,
For nygh my deth as han þei wrought,
But now y truste they nevir shal,
Whatsoever be seid or thought.

6289 for in every detail I exempt nothing

6293–94 you know what I could [would like to] see [which would give] me happiness and greatest pleasure

6299 . . . I never shall [be free from adversity]

6307 for they have nearly caused my death

Sett tyme or that þe wynd apalle 6310
 And clowdid be þe mone aloft
 No more but yowre y [am] and shall,
 Whatsoeuyr be seid or thought. f 143v
Ch. 142, B LXXXVIIIa, Burgundy to Orleans

B114

Syn that y am yowre, haue ben, & shall
 Withouten part of elliswhere servise, 6315
 Albe Absence me holt sogett and thrall,
 I yow biseche in my most humble wise
 That of yowre fare ye lust me to avise,
 For wot ye this, myn hert is lade der.
 I gesse ye wolde haue sende me more þen twise, 6320
 If þat it were as y koude wisshe it were.

for ther nys howre in day nor yet in nyȝt
 But that y pray to God right humbly
 To sende me sone from yow þat myght 6325
 Aquyk myn hert, where now for fright y die,
 Which shulde ben lo, god wot, ful hastily,
 Or y at lest parcas to ben yow nere,
 Ne were þe cause—ye wot as wel as y—
 But al is not as y koude wisshe it were.

If ther be ought þat y may do, 6330
 Spare not to put my lijf in Iupartý,
 Nor what y haue to take vnto,
 For levir were it to me, verily
 (As in yowre right), þis howre to die,
 Then lyue (ye, hert, a thousand yere!) 6335

6310 Use your time before the wind slackens

6312 yours alone I am and shall be

6319 . . . my heart is heavily laden

6326–28 which should be [sent] . . . very soon, or [I pray God] at least to be near you, were it not for—you know [what it is] as well as I—“To ben” is parallel to “to sende” (6324).

6332–37 nor [spare] to take what I have in addition, for I would rather die right now, as is your right [to decree], than [continue to] live—else vengeance be upon me if I lie! To do it [die at your behest] would be the death I would wish for

—Ellis vengeaunce on me and y lie!
To don hit were as y koude wisse it were.

I trust that it shall frame oure brest, f 144r
If y lyue to anothis yere,
To sett oure hertis more at rest 6340
And shall ben even as y koude wisse it were.
No French

B115

A Llas, Madame, what maner strijf
Is ther bitwene yowre mouth and y?
Not se y but the poore lijf
Which þat y lede must hit aby, 6345
Without ye hem accorde trewly,
For when yowre mouth me swerith deth,
Me thynkith yowre eyen “mercy” seith.

Thus but ye <them> appese trewly,
I drede ther warre wil me devowre, 6350
For if so be they do me die,
The cause it is for y am yowre,
Which stonde as voyde of all socoure
As in extreme vpyeldyng breth
To that yowre eyen “mercy” seith. 6355

So stonde y in ayde of þat on
And not what is my best reed
To Plesure from yowre eyen goon
Vnto myn hert, that lieth ded,
Me seiying how yowre <goodlihed> 6360
Hath for my lijf ymade aseth
And “all forgyue” and “mercy” seith.

6338 I hope that it will do our hearts good

6341 and shall become exactly as I wish it would be.

6344–45 I see nothing [i.e., no possibility] but that the wretched life I lead (i.e., I) must suffer because of it

6353 “Which” refers to the speaker.

6356–57 Therefore I stand [firm] in support of them [the eyes] and know not what advice is best till . . .

This lo the oth that ye haue sworne f 144v
 More sharpe þen poynt of swerd or thorne,
 Me thynkith it thrillith me and sleth, 6365
 Saue that yowre eyen “mercy” seith!
No French

B116

- [Amant:] **U** Ende me yowre praty mouth, Madame.
 [Lady:] Se how y knele here at yowre feet?
 Whie wolde ye occupy the same?
 Now whereabowt first mot me wite. 6370
 [A:] Iwis, dere hert, to basse it, swete,
 A twyse or thrise or that y die.
 [L:] So may ye haue when next we mete
 Toforne or ye it ocupie.
 [A:] Or y it occupy? wel, wel! 6375
 Is my reward but suche a skorne?
 [L:] Ye, woo is me for yowre seek hele,
 But it may heele right wel tomorne.
 [A:] Then se y wel: though y were lorne
 For oon poore cosse, ye sett not by! 6380
 [L:] Seide y yow not ynough toforne:
 Ye may haue or ye occupy?
 [A:] Ye, for that cosse y thanke yow that,
 Forwhi yet am y nevir þe nere.
 [L:] Then come agayne, this wot ye what, 6385
 Anothir tyme—and not to yere.
 [A:] A, fy! wel, wel! A, swet hert dere.
 Bi verry god, ye mot aby!
 [L:] Nay, bete me not, first take it here f 145r
 Toforne or ye it occupy. 6390
 [A:] Ye, so, so, swete! ye, so, swete hert!

6363 “The oth” refers back to 6347.

6370 First I must know how [i.e., for what purpose you will occupy it].

6373 You may have [died] when next we meet [at your funeral]

6382 ?You *might* have died before you got your kiss

Good thrift vnto þat praty eye!
 Nay, erst lo must ye this avert—
 How y seide “or ye it occupy.”

No French

B117

PResence of yow hit causith my comfort
 And so my payne when sight of yow y mysse,
 And, syn so is y may not yow resort,
 This write y yow, myn owen dere hertis blisse,
 Forto bithynke me, which þat sende yow þis,
 As for yowre owen (and shall ben evir),
 Owt secund choys or on vnto me levir.

6395

6400

So am y yowre, wol be, haue, and shall!
 To oren a wrecche therto saue þat yowre grace
 Mi deth to lette, so lust me to yow calle,
 For which gif y not shulde my lyvis space
 Mi karkas payne in eche a tyme or case
 Yowre plesere to (noon othir nevir),
 Owt secund choys or on vnto me levir,

6405

The self howre as mot y therwith dey
 And nevir come vnto þe blisse of heven.
 Not say y this but wel parcas þat y
 In pevisse synne myght happe me in a seven
 Which is þe viij synne to synnes vij
 But that y truste hit shall as not dissever
 Owt secunde choys or on vnto me lever.

6410

f 145v

6415

6399–6400 [to cause you] to consider me, who send you this [letter], as your own
 (and [I] shall be [yours] always)

6401 without a second choice . . .

6402 So I am yours, will be, have been, and shall [be]!

6407 to do your pleasure ([and] never [that of] any other)

6409–15 ?[if I do not do my best to please you] may I die that very hour and
 never go to heaven—I say this only on the off chance that I might ?sin in my
 sleep, which is the eighth sin, but I hope, more than any other thing, it will not be
 a cause for our separation.

So pray y yow, if ye me thynke amys,
 Remembre yow how that y say in this—
 I am yowre owen and wol ben evyr
 Owt secund choys or on vnto me levir.

No French



Fy, Fortune, fy! þi dissayt and skorne,
 For all þi fraude, retorne yet wilfully,
 That woldist ay eche wele were sone forlorne.
 Iwis, [s]coffer, yet art þou no thing ny
 Me to disseyve, for clene y the defy!
 To wel therto parseyue y lo þi thouzt,
 Nor yet þou get me not, for all þi spie,
 Nor yet, y trust, heraftir shalt þou not!

B118

6420

6425

To wel knowen haue y þee toforne
 To be bigilid with thi mokkery.
 I am to ware of þee to were an horne,
 Wherfore þat this y pray þee hertily—
 Thi mokkis selle to þem þat lust it by!
 Full yvil ware of þee oft haue y bouzt,
 So yet þou get me not, for all þi spie,
 Nor yet, y trust, heraftir shalt þou not.

6430

6435

Now wolde y say þou haddist þee wel borne
 Me to deseyve bi sleight or trechery,
 Which do revolve at eve or morne
 The dowbill turnys of thi iupartay.
 So were y foole to trusten þee trewly,
 Wherfore, as y haue seid vnto thee oft,
 That yet þou get me not, for all þi spy,
 Nor yet, y trust, heraftir shalt þou not.

f 146r

6440

So fy on Fortune! fy on Ielowsy!
 And all þe awayte ye haue vnto me wrouzt,

6445

6421–22 . . . turn [your wheel] of your own free will, you who . . .

6423–24 . . . yet you are not even close to being able to deceive me . . .

6428 I have known you too well in time past

6445 and all the schemes you [two] have set in action against me

For yet ye get me not, for all yowre spy,
Nor yet, y trust, heraftir shalt þou not.

No French

B119

Retorne, for shame, retorne, retorne, ageyne!

Hye not to fast, parde, ye gon amys!

Leue wayes twart and take þe pathis playne.

6450

I wis ye mowe not ouyrgone <as> this.

Such long abode, god wot, in vayne it is,

Saue to forfaynten and forwery me.

I put yowre silf to be my Iuge, ywis,

When ye are—where?—now where as ye shulde be,

6455

for how ye go, as that y goo, y go not wel,

But all forgo and clene mysgo out of my wey,

Owt hope of wey vnto myn hertis hele,

But ye of grace me lust there to conuay,

So be my gide to as moche ioy, y pray,

6460

As ye han brought me in aduersite.

Nys hit resoun? ne say ye no “nay, nay!”

<I> wol welcome yow where as ye shulde be.

The wey that ye now take, þenke ye hit good?

f 146v

Who ledde yow so, ye wolde not seme it fayre.

6465

Ye seche to many stilis straunge, bi þe rood,

For, trust ye wel, onys must ye nede repayre

To Louys court to tasten of þat leyre,

And then lo wol ye curse—þis shal ye se!—

Bothe Slouthe him silf, his fadir, sone & heyre,

6470

And all his blood—were ye where ye shulde be.

Soune ye or y y wolde y vndirstood

Ne wotith not eche wight as wel as ye

That ye are made as men of flesshe & blood?

6450 Leave the byways and take the straight path

6454–57 I call on you to judge the truth of my claim . . . when you are . . . where you ought to be [i.e., act properly toward me], for however you go, when I go, I do not go aright

Whi make ye towgh to com where ye shulde be?

6475

No French

B120

SO fresshe bewte, so moche goodlynes,
 So skace of grace, so large of crewelte,
 So moche vertew and so moche gantilnes,
 So long this straunge, so bareyne of pite,
 So lusty yowthe, so replete of bounte,
 So litil mercy and so gret disdayne—
 So fervent loue, then, as hit cawsith me,
 How may it be owt sle yng me in payne?

6480

So many othis as y haue yow swore,
 So koward drede whi take ye, or mystrust?
 So fayre bihest and y a skorne therfore;
 So moche to loue where ye ageyne dislust.
 So for what cawse y wolde fayne þat y wist,
 —So it not greve nor yow offende ageyne.
 So ovirtwart as þis is knyht and twyst,
 How may it be owt sle yng me in payne?

6485

f 147r

So sle ye me, dere hert, bi god alon!
 So when ye charge me speke no more of þis,
 So but y shulde my wery lijf forgon,
 So may y not, but syn yowre plesere is
 So for my trouthe to doon me deye, ywis,
 So hit may ese yow eek to se me slayne,
 So as ye do and lo it kan not mys—
 How may it be owt sle yng me in payne?

6495

Go, poore bille, good fortune be þi gide,
 Forblot with teeris of myn eyen twayne;

6500

6476 Such youthful beauty . . .

6489–90 if it does not anger nor offend (against) you. This matter is so perversely intertwined

6494–96 . . . even if I wished to die, I cannot, but since [it] is your pleasure to cause me to die in exchange for my faithfulness thus . . .

6501–2 all bespattered with tears of my two eyes; for me to be joyful and hide my sorrows

For me to ioy my sorowis and to hide—
How may it be owt sleying me in payne?

No French

B121

AS for farewell! farewell! farewell! farewell!
And of farewell more þen a þousand skore
Haue ye fare wel! —or more, had y to dele,
For forto say þis partyng doth me sore—
Hit doth, hit doth! hit nede no more ben sore,
For though þat y wolde kepe it close mafay,
Mi bollid hert doth so his sikis rore
That, mawgre me, hit doth my wele biwray.

6505

6510

What may y doon now, leuyng yowre presence,
But drawe me sool my silven to complayne,
In waylyng so þe tyme of yowre absence
Which is to me, god wot, most grevous payne,
And wol be to that y se yow agayne,
Which let ben, swete, as sone as þat ye may,
For þe sighis þat doth ellis on me rayne,
As maugre me, þei wol myn hert biwray.

f 147v

Bithynk yow eek þat it is passyng hard
Vnto an hert ful of aduersite
To hide his payne, þat is so sore bistad,
—So blynd is Loue and wenyth othir be.
This say y lo my selven wel bi me:
That sore y drede, syn y am yeven a way,
Lest þat my bollyng sighis on [me] preve,
As maugre me þat hit my loue biwray.

6520

6525

But in good trouthe þe deth hit were me leuyr
Then hit were wist wherfor þat y yow pray
Albe y fer forget me neuyr
To eft sone þat y may yow more biwray.

6530

6511 . . . it betrays my will
6524 I say this about myself

Appendices

I. English Poems Not Found in Harley 682

For the sake of completeness, I include here the other English poems attributed to Charles of Orleans. Because they have been transcribed inaccurately in the past (by a series of scholars), I present them diplomatically, with full transcription of the variants. Apart from doubting that the poems in the autograph manuscript were ever intended (as Steele suggested, xxxi n) to "complete" the roundel sequence of *Fortunes Stabîlnes*, I have little to say about them. Each must be studied on its own merits and in its own context. When all the vagaries of transmission history, spelling, time lapses (both in composition and in transmission), scribal idiosyncrasies, and possible adaptation are taken into account, it is not difficult to see that these are not likely to resemble the other poems in this book very closely. They are, however, written in more or less the same fixed forms. It is perhaps worth noting that a few English poems occur in three different MSS of Charles's French poems, a juxtaposition which would be very unlikely if the duke were not known to have tried his hand at composition in English.

One or more of the poems are extant in five manuscripts: (1) B.N. MS. f. fr. 25458 (the duke's autograph manuscript): 1-9; (2) B.L. MS. Royal 16 F. ii (a late MS, c. 1500, which contains a collection of the duke's French poems, as well as a series of splendid miniatures, including one illustrating the opening allegory of the God of Love and the famous one illustrating Charles's arrival at and incarceration in the Tower of London): 2, 10-11; and (3) Bodley MS. Fairfax 16 (a miscellaneous collection of late medieval courtly lyric and narrative verse): 7.¹ Two other manuscripts (Carpentras 375 and B.N. f. fr. 1104) are of no value in establishing the texts of these poems. I have not recorded their variants.²

Inasmuch as I do not intend here to edit the entire corpus of Charles's English poems, I have not included descriptions of these manuscripts. Cham-

¹ For which see Fox, *Lyric Poetry*, or Spence, *French Chansons*, frontis.

² Bibl. Carpentras 375 is a copy of the autograph manuscript, made for the duchess, Marie of Cleves, probably between 1455 and 1458, (according to Champion); B.N. MS. f. fr. 1104 is also a copy of 25458, executed during Charles's lifetime, but of no textual authority; it once belonged to Catherine de Medici (see Champion, xvi-viii, xx).

pion discusses all of them (*Poésies*, ix–xxi) except the Fairfax, which is described in Norton-Smith's edition of the facsimile edition. All of the poems are printed in the editions of Champion³ and of Steele and Day.⁴

B.N. f. fr. 25458 (O) has been used as the base text for those poems which occur in the autograph manuscript (nos. 1–9). The spaces left for two-line capitals in the French MS were never filled; only the guide letters remain. The initial letter of each line, as in so many French MSS, is separated by a double vertical line from what follows, making decisions about word division slightly more difficult than usual. I have regularized the capitalization of the first word of every line. The refrain lines are not indented in the Royal MS (R).

Champion has said of the question of the authorship of two English poems in Charles's autograph MS (LXXXVIII and LXXXIX, in his hand) that "La présomption me parait en faveur du duc."⁵ John Norton-Smith has suggested, in the introduction to the facsimile edition, that Charles might be the author of a number of lyrics in Booklet 5 of the Fairfax MS.⁶ The entire matter of the authorship of these poems requires further study.

1.

[A]gens the comynge of may
That is fule of lustynes
Let vs leue ale heuynes
As fer as we can or may

Now is tym of myrth and play
Wynter weth hys ydylnes
Is dyscomfet as y ges
And Redy to fle away
Agens &c.

5

Wherfore ladys .I 3ow pray
That 3e take in 3ow gladnes
And do al 3our besynes
To be mery nyght and day
Agens &c.

10

A *rondeau*. B.N. f. fr. 25458, 310, poem 117; ed. Champion, 569.

³ 256–57 [those in Charles's hand], 569–72.

⁴ 220–25. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Grenoble MS. 873, a MS of the duke's French poems together with a Latin translation of them by his Italian secretary, Antonio Astesan, contains *no* English poems, according to the librarian, M. Michel Merland.

⁵ *Poésies*, 569. Alice Planche has argued that they are the duke's work, and in fact few have argued with any fervor that they are not. She points to a number of parallels between these English poems and the duke's French poems (*Recherche d'un langage*, 108–13).

⁶ *Fairfax 16*, viii, xxix. For a refutation of this argument, see Jansen, 'Suffolk' *Poems*, 21–28.

2.

[G]o forth myn hert wyth my lady
 Loke that ye spar no besynes
 To serue hyr wyth seche lowlynes
 That 3e get hyr grace and mercy

Pray hyr of tymes pryuely 5
 That sche quippe trewly hyr promes
 Go forth &c

I most as a hertles body
 Abyde alone in heuynes
 And 3e schal d[o]wel wyth your maistres 10
 In plesans glad and mery
 Go forth &c.

A roundel. B.N. f. fr. 25458, 310, poem 118; ed. Champion, 570; London, Royal 16 F.ii, fol. 69r-v (headed *Chancon.*; blank line after 7, rather than 4; 9 begins on verso; dot at end of every line except 2; refrain lines not indented).

Roundels number 2-6, 8-9, and 11 have the same number of lines per section as the majority of the roundels of H, though one rather than two abbreviated refrain lines appear. In this poem, as in the last two poems, below, the Royal scribe, apparently a Frenchman, has made some errors attributable only to a non-English speaker, e.g., in lines 8-9. The form *quippe* in line 5 S&D ascribe to "a French author writing English phonetically," that is, Charles himself (cf. the form *quere* for *cure* in line 2244).

1. myn] *my* R; wyth] *wt* R

2. besynes] *bysynes* R

3. hyr wyth seche lowlynes] *her wt such lolynes* R

4-5. *That ye gette her oftyme pryuely* [eye-skip] R

6. sche quippe trewly hyr promes] *she kepe truly her promes* R

8. I most] *I Nuist* R; hertles] *helis* R

10. 3e schal] *ye shal* R; dowel] *o* marked for erasure O, *dwell* R; your maistres] *your mastres* R

11. plesans] *plaisauns* R

3.

[F]or the reward of half a 3ere
 Tow trewelouys upon the brest
 Hyt ys y now to brynge yn Rest
 A hert that loue hold yn dangere

Whenne he hath be sume wat strangere 5
 To hym ys holyday and fest
 For the &c

Thousche hyt be a Iuel ful dere

And a charme for the tempest
 Yet y conseilte hym to be prest 10
 And fore a3ens the warderere
 For the &c

A roundel. B.N. f. fr. 25458, 311, poem 119; ed. Champion, 570.

Richard Firth Green, in an unpublished lecture, has discussed this lyric as a roundel obscure on account of its occasional nature, composed and used perhaps as a response to the gift of a piece of jewelry in the shape of two flowers called true-loves from a lady. A similar approach to a number of the poems in *Fortunes Stabilnes* might reveal meanings in what is now obscure.

4.

[A]las mercy wher shal myn hert yow fynd
 Neuer had he wyth yow ful aquaintans
 Now com to hym and put of hys greuans
 Ellys ye be vnto yowr frend vnkynd

Mercy he hath euer yow in hys mynd 5
 Ons let hym haue sum conforth of plesans
 Alas mercy &c
 Let hym not dey but mak at ons a nende
 In al hys woo an Right heuy penans
 Noght is the help that whyl not hym avans 10
 Slauth hys to me and euer com be hynde
 Alas mercy &c

A roundel. B.N. f. fr. 25458, 311, poem 120; ed. Champion, 570–71.

This lyric, about which much has been written, contains an acrostic on the name Anne Molins (see Hammond, “Anne Molyneux,” and Seaton, *Studies in Villon*, “Two English Ladies”).

8. a nende] error for *an ende*

5.

[Y]e shal be payd after your whyfulnes
 And blame nothyng but your mysgouernans
 For when good loue wold fayn had yow auans
 Then went ye bak wyth wyly frauhyednes

I knew anon your sotyl wylenes 5
 And your danger that was mad for a scans
 Ye schal be &c
 Ye might haue been my lady and maistres

For euer mor with outhyn varians
 But now my hert yn yngland or in france 10
 Ys go to seke other nyw besynes
 Ye schal be &c

A roundel. B.N. f. fr. 25458, 312, poem 121; ed. Champion, 571.

6.
 [S]o fayre so freshe so goodely on to se
 So welle dymeynet in al your gouernans
 That to my hert it is a grete plesans
 Of your godenes when y remembre me

 And trustyth fully wher that euer y be 5
 I wylle abyde vndyr your obeyssance
 So fayre &c.
 For in my thought ther is no mo but ye
 Whom y haue seruid wythout repentance
 Wher fore y pray yow sethe to my greuance 10
 And put osyde all myn aduersite
 So fayre &c.

A roundel. B.N. f. fr. 25458, 312, poem 122; ed. Champion, 571.

7.
 [O] thou fortune which hast the gouernance
 Of alle thynges kyndely meuyng to se fro
 Thaym to demene after thyn ordonnance
 Right as thou lyst to grante hem wele or wo
 Syth that thou lyst / that I be on of tho 5
 That must be rewlyd be thyn ausines
 Why wylt thou not wythstand myn heuynes

 Me thyng thou art vnkynde as in thys case
 To suffre me so long a whylle endure
 So grete a peyne. wehout mercy and grase 10
 Which greuyth me right sore I the ensure
 And syth thou knawst / I am that creature
 That wolde be fauourd be thy gentilles
 Why whylt thou not wythstand myn heuynes

 What causyth the to be myn aduersarie 15
 I haue not done which that schuld the displese
 And yit thou art to myn entent contrarie

Which makyth alwey my sorous to encrese
 And syth thou wotst myn hert ys not in ese
 But euer in trouble wythout sykyruenes 20
 Why wylt thou not wythstand myn heuynes

To the allonly thys compleynt I make
 For thou art cause of myn aduersite
 And yit I wote welle thou mayst vndertake
 For myn welfare if that thou lyst agre 25
 I haue no cause to blame no wyght but the
 For thys thou doste of verrey wylfulnes
 Why wylt thou not wythstand myn heuynes

A ballade. B.N. f. fr. 25458, 313, poem 123; ed. Champion, 571–72; Oxford, Bodl. Fairfax 16 (hereafter *F*), fol. 321r-v (heading *Compleynt*; lines 23–28 on verso; text unpunctuated; see Norton-Smith, viii, xiii; Jansen, “Fairfax Poems,” ‘*Suffolk Poems*”).

1. fortune] *Fortune* F; which] *whyche* F; gouernnance] *gouernaunce* F
2. alle thynges kyndely meuyng] *alle thyngs kyndly meuyng* F; se] *and* F (misreading of *ε* or *εc* by French scribe, see Jansen, ‘*Suffolk Poems*, 10, “Fairfax Poems,” 218)
3. after] *afyr* F; ordonnance] *ordynaunce* F
4. grante] *graunt* F
6. be rewlyd] *bereulyd* F; ausines] *avysinesse* F
7. wylt thou] *wyltow* F; heuynes] *heuynesse* F
8. thyng] *thynk* F; vnkynde as] *vnkynd os* F; thys] *this* F
9. whylle] *while* F
10. grete] *gret* F; peyne. [*dot centered*] wehout mercy (The *e* of *wehout* perhaps a misreading of *i*) *payn wyth out mersy* F; and] *or* F
11. greuyth] *greuyd* F; right] *ryght* F
12. knawst] *knowst* F
13. wolde] *wold* F; fauourd] *fauoured* F; gentilles] *gentyllesse* F
14. whylt thou] *wyltow* F; wythstand] *wythstonde* F; heuynes] *heuynesse* F
15. aduersarie] *aduersarye* F
16. schuld the displese] *shulde dysplese* F
17. thou art *over erasure* F; contrarie] *contrarye* F
18. Which] *Whiche* F; alwey] *now* F; encrese] *encres* F
19. thou wotst] *you wost* F
20. euer] *euer* F; wythout sykyruenes] *wyth out sykernesse* F
21. wylt thou] *wyltow* F; wythstand] *wystande* F; heuynes] *heuynesse* F
22. thys] *this* F
23. [321b] aduersite] *aduersyte* F
24. wote welle] *wot wele* F; vndertake] *undirtake* F
25. welfare if] *wel fare yf* F
27. doste] *doost* F; verrey wylfulnes] *verrey wylfulnesse* F

28. wylt thou] *wyltow* F; heuynes] *heuynesse* F

8.

[M]yn hert hath send glad hope in hys message
 Vn to comfort plesans Ioye and sped
 I pray to god that *grace* may hym leed
 Wythout lettynge or daunger of passage

[I]n tryst to fynd profit and auantage
 Wyth yn short tym to the help of hys ned
 [M]yn hert &c
 [V]nto comfort &c

5

[T]ille þat he come myn hert yn ermytage
 Of thoght shalle dwele a lone god gyve hym med
 And of wysshynge of tymys shal hym fed
 Glad hope folyw & sped wele thys viage
 [M]yn hert &c

10

A roundel. B.N. f. fr. 25458, 346, poem 182, ed. Champion, *Poésies*, Chanson LXXXVIII, 256⁷

This poem and the one following (nos. 8–9) are in Charles's own hand (for examples of Charles's hand, see Champion, *Manuscrit Autograph, Histoire Poétique, Joueur d'échecs*). No guide letters are visible for the refrain lines. Charles uses the thorn in both of these poems (no. 8, line 9; no. 9, line 1), betraying a confirmed habit of writing English. Note that only in these two poems (8–9) and the two following (10–11), written (according to Champion) by a Flemish scribe, do the *-aun* (rather than *-an*) spellings appear. Champion suggests that both this poem and the next contain an echo (not "une traduction, mais d'une interprétation assez libre") of Chanson LXI (569; poem, 240); in addition, lines 9–10 echo Ballade XLIII: "Mon cueur est devenu hermite / En l'ermitage de Pensee" (64), which in turn brings to mind its English counterpart (B 43).

9.

Whan shal thou come glad hope fro þi vyage
 Thow hast taryd to long many a day
 For alle comford is put fro my away
 Tyll that .I. her tythyng of þy message

⁷ Also in B.N. f. fr. 1104, fol. 73, Chanson 123; and Bibl. Carpentras 375, 73 (headed *Chanson en Anglois*).

[W]hat that had be lettyng of thy passage 5
 Or tariynge alas I can not say
 [W]hen shal &c [T]how hast &c.

[T]how knows fulwel þat I have gret damage
 In abydyngē of the that is no nay
 And thof y synge & dauns or lagh and play 10
 In blake mournyngis clothyd my corage
 [W]han shal &c

A roundel. B.N. f. fr. 25458, 346, poem 183 (in the hand of Charles himself. No guide letters are visible for the refrain lines, two of which have been written together on line 7, or for line 5.); ed. Champion, *Chanson LXXXIX*, 256-57⁸

In addition to *Chanson LXI* (see also note to lyric 9, above), this poem echoes *Ballade XVII* (cf. "Je suis celui au cuer vestu de noir" and line 12), according to Champion. He does not note that the phrase "this is no nay" occurs in B 33 (1212) and B 88 (5447).

1. þi] *i* written above *þ*.

10.

Chancon.

My hertly loue is in your governans
 And euer shal þat I. lyue may
 I pray to god I may see that day
 That we be knyht with trouthfull alyans
 Ye shal not fynd feynyng or variauns 5

As in my part that wyl I. trewly say
 My hertly.&c.

A roundel. London, B.L. Royal 16 F.ii, fol. 118r-v (lines 6-7 on 118v)

The three-line initial letter is illuminated, as is the one-line initial letter of each line; the second letter of each line (except in 2-3) is a capital. The (apparently francophone) scribe, who distinguishes *u* from *n* by the height of the ligature, has made two errors (lines 1, 5).

1. your] *yo*, followed by *r* superscript above dot; governans] *gouernus*, superscript *a*.
2. whille] *whill*, with crossed double *l*; þat] *t* written above *þ*

⁸ Also in B.N. f. fr. 1104, fol. 73v. Rondel 46; and Bibl. Carpentras 375, 73 (headed *A good song in English*).

5. variauns] *varianns*

11.

Chancon.

Ne were my trewe innocent hert.

How ye hold with her aliauns

That somtym *with* word of plesauns

Desceyued you vnder couert.

Thynke how the stroke of loue comsmert

Without warnyng or deffiauns.

Ne were my.&c.

5

And ye shall pryuely or appert.

See her by me in loues dauns.

Wyth her faire femenyn contenauns.

Ye shalle neuer fro her astert.

Ne were my.&c.

10

A roundel. London, B.L. Royal 16 F.ii, fol. 131r.

Both this lyric and the previous one contain the word *aliauns*, a word which appears eight times in the English poems. Cf. line 5 with lines 2426 ("that with the strok loue at the wound in stert"). The foreign scribe, who distinguishes *u* from *m* and *n* by the height of the ligature, has made two errors (lines 2, 6).

1. Ne were] error for *Bewere* (emended by Croft, 153)
2. aliauns] *aliaims*
3. *with*] *ɪ* written above *w*; plesauns] superscript *a*
5. comsmert] error for *con smert*
6. deffiauns] *deffianns*

§

II. Distribution of Ballade forms

121 ballades: 83 with French counterparts [+]
38 without French counterparts [-]

I. 1-83 [+]:

- a. all have envoys (added in 20 cases)
- b. stanza lengths vary from 8 to 15 lines
- c. rhymes per stanza vary from 2 to 7

d. all use the same rhymes in every stanza

(exceptions: 58, 60, 62, 74 [-] follow pattern as in II)

*75-81 [+] form a special subgroup:

*a. they form a narrative group and lack envoys

*b. all have 8-line stanzas

*c. rhymes per stanza vary from 2 to 3

*d. all use the same rhymes in every stanza

II. 84-121 [-]:

a. all have envoys

b. all have 8-line stanzas (except two with 7 lines)

c. all have 3 rhymes per stanza

d. 10 use the same rhymes in every stanza

28 use a new rhyme set in each stanza

(exceptions: 101, 107, 111, 113 [+] follow pattern as in I)

N.B.: see Introduction, "Verse Forms: The Ballade" on envoys in the French ballades.

The ballades all have envoys (Ia + IIa).⁹ Of the ballades which have French counterparts, fewer than 1/4 of the envoys are added to French poems that lack them.¹⁰ The poems with French counterparts vary in stanza length (Ib) and in the numbers of rhymes per stanza (Ic), but all use a single rhyme set from stanza to stanza (Id). The poems without French counterparts nearly always have eight-line stanzas (IIb) and three rhymes per stanza (IIc), but in the majority of cases (2:1) begin each stanza with a new rhyme set (IIId) (i.e., eight rhymes per poem instead of three; the refrain rhyme must obviously remain the same).¹¹

⁹ H. Cohen says, "My own impression of these [English] envoys is that they harmonize perfectly, in every case, with the *ballade* to which they are attached and that they are on the same poetic level with the other stanzas of the poem" (*The Ballade*, 272).

¹⁰ The fact that sixty-three of the eighty-three ballades already have envoys in the French is a fact not made clear by some of the poems' critics. Although Charles's French poems sometimes lack envoys, this should not be taken as a characteristic of French ballades, especially those not intended for musical accompaniment; the majority of ballades by Christine de Pisan, for instance, end with envoys.

¹¹ The only exception to these generalizations is Ballade 111, which has a French counterpart but contains new rhymes in each stanza. This ballade is unusual, too, in that it occurs much later in the autograph French manuscript than the other poems that Charles reworked in English, and the English version may have been written in the course of his composition of a number of the surrounding English poems in the looser form, an

It is also difficult to see why Charles constructed all his roundels in the same basic form, both those with French counterparts and those without, yet employed a form for his English ballades that was in most cases different from the forms of his original compositions. On the other hand, it makes great sense that, once the duke had tried his hand at the looser English ballade form, given all the other difficulties that writing in a second language presented, he would have continued to experiment with the increased flexibility the form offered him (even if he retained some reservations as to whether it was cricket to eliminate some of the technical difficulties of composition).

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III. Corrections to Steele and Day Edition

Since Steele expanded crossed *-ll* to *-lle*, I have included errors concerning crossed *-ll* here, even though I have not treated the bar as an abbreviation. This list does not include errors of capitalization but does include word division errors (though I have normalized word division in the text). Expansions in my text, spelled in accordance with the scribe's preferences, sometimes differ from Steele's. Textual notes must of course be consulted for scribal revisions. Steele's text precedes my correction.

Steele

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|
| 22 to | te | 410 geve / | geve [followed |
| 70 If | Of | | by carat] |
| 114 atamyd | a tamyd | 491 too | to |
| 132 ressayue. | ressayue | 540 away | a way |
| 198 he, | he [followed by | 560 aslake | a slake |
| | carat, followed | 576 aslake | a slake |
| | by] . | 581 aslake | a slake |
| 235 a plight | aplight | 583 mow | mowe |
| 393 of | or | ywis | y wis |

exercise which may have suggested itself in reworking this poem. Ballades 101 and 107 (of the "exceptions" I have listed) are displaced from the earlier series (if the autograph manuscript order provides any evidence) and were therefore written employing the earlier, stricter structure. Charles was clearly slow to become convinced of the superiority of using a new set of rhymes in each stanza. In a number of the poems that he composed only in English he used the stricter French form; the number in the looser form is less than a quarter of the total number of ballades. Once again, it is more difficult to understand this phenomenon if we are speaking of an English translator than if we are speaking of the poet himself.

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| 665 aslake | a slake | 3667 askaunce | a skaunce |
| 698 unto | vnto | 3699 alles | alles |
| 699 aturbaunce | a turbaunce | 3945 to biwayle | tobiwayle |
| 859 remembraunce | remembraunce | 4029 a myte | amyte |
| 868 Forwhi | For whi | 4033 a lite | alite |
| 876 him, | him [followed by carat] | 4076 a lite | alite |
| y trost | y trvst | 4224 a man | aman |
| 901 than | then | 4298 hevye | heuy |
| 944 trouthe | trouthe | 4337 askaunce | a skaunce |
| 1230 Full well | Fullle welle | 4349 lo | so |
| 1273 Shalle | Shalle | 4457 Iturnyd | I turnyd |
| 1619 owne | owen | 4725 through | thorough |
| 2030 woofull | woofulle | 4790 aquyt | a quyt |
| 2048 all | alle | 5033 Her | Hir |
| 2246 acordith | accordith | 5075 nemene | neiuene |
| 2320 so | lo | 5086 aside | a side |
| 2328 Noou | Noon | 5096 Owit | Owit [note] |
| 2492 vanth | rath | 5105 sle | slee |
| 2531 wolle | wolle | 5107 vs | vs a |
| 2551 stonde | stoude | 5169 shall | shalle |
| 2580 Forwhi | For whi | 5290 cleyn | cleyne |
| 2593 full | fulle | 5321 by | bi |
| 2626 full | fulle | 5354 that | þat |
| 2677 Forwhi | For whi | 5407 gaunt | graunt |
| 2739 from | fro | [corrected in corregenda] | |
| 2966 all | alle | 5508 prince | prince |
| 2994 whiche | which | 5544 the | thee |
| 3061 as | ar | 5740 unto | vnto |
| 3069 it | hit | 5954 piti | putt |
| 3074 aslepe | a slepe | 6095 loke | lo ke |
| 3093 depaynt is | depayntis | 6100 alle | alle |
| 3115 shalle | shalle | 6154 amys | a mys |
| 3139 consertis | conseitis | 6231 every | euery |
| 3245 it | a | 6325 Aquyk | A quyk |
| 3284 all | alle | 6335 lyve | lyue |
| 3401 yowre. | yowre | 6356 in ayde | inayde |
| 3421 not | now | 6360 goodlihed | goodlihod |
| 3659 aqueyntaunce | a queyntaunce | 6381 ynough | y nough |
| 3662 Ynowe | y nowe | 6498 Do | So |

For *þ* with *u* written above it Steele prints *þu* at 1192, 1230, 1578, *þou* at 1811, 2573, 2878, 6097.

Other English poems (Steele, 220–25):

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1.1 Azens | [A]zens | 8.7 Myn hert &c. | [M]yn hert &c |
| 1.10 I | .I | 8.8 Vnto comfort &c. | [V]nto comfort &c |
| 2.1 Go | [G]o | 8.10 alone | a lone |
| 2.7 &c. | &c | 8.13 Myn hert &c. | [M]yn hert &c |
| 3.1 For | [F]or | 9.5 What | [W]hat |
| 3.7 &c. | &c | 9.7–8 When shal &c. | [W]hen shal &c [T]how |
| 3.12 &c. | &c | / Thow hast &c. | hast &c. |
| 3.3 ynow | y now | | [written on one line in O] |
| 3.5 sumewat | sume wat | 9.9 Thow | [T]how |
| 4.1 Alas | [A]las | 9.9 that | þat |
| 4.7 &c. | &c | 9.13 What shal &c. | [W] shal &c |
| 4.8 a-Mende | a nende | 10.1 your gouernans | your gouernaus |
| 4.9 all | al | 10.2 I | I. |
| 4.12 &c. | &c | 10.5 variauns | varianns |
| 5.1 Ye | [Y]e | 10.6 I | I. |
| 5.7 &c. | &c | 10.7 My hertly &c. | My hertly.&c. |
| 5.9 euermor | euer mor | 11.4 couert | couert. |
| 5.9 withouthyn | with outhyn | 11.5 com smert | comsmert |
| 5.12 &c. | &c | 11.7 my &c. | my.&c. |
| 6.1 So | [S]o | 11.8 appert | appert. |
| 6.10 Wherfore | Wher fore | 11.9 dauns | dauns. |
| 7.1 O | [O] | 11.11 shall | shalle |
| 7.2 all | alle | 11.11 astert | astert. |
| 7.8 Methyng | Me thyng | 11.12 my &c. | my.&c. |
| 7.20 sykyrnes | sykyruenes | | |
| 8.1 Myn | [M]yn | | |
| 8.5 In | [I]n | | |

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IV. Manuscript Abbreviation System

I offer an overview of the scribe's abbreviation system, even though I have expanded abbreviations in the text, because Steele omits such an overview from his edition. Only confirmed habits of the scribe, such as crossed *-ll* (if indeed it is intended as an abbreviation) and the tittle, are employed with some regularity; all other abbreviations are used only when it is necessary for the scribe to save space.

Raised *i* (above *p*) signals the omission of *r* (58);

although the 2-shaped abbreviation of ModE “your” was expanded by Steele to *your*, I have expanded as *yowre* (205), because this is the only spelling the scribe uses;

raised heart, diamond, or dot with a tail curving to the right (Hector’s “bold pendant comma”), or occasionally an *S* curve through such a dot (198) may stand for *ir/yr* (147, 180), *er* (294), *re* (201), as well as for *uo* in *quod* (2839);

raised *u* indicates the omission of *o*, as in *thou* (1192);

p with a crossed descender or with a dot on each side of the descender indicates *per* (98, 1234) or *par* (1250); with a recurved stroke from the bowl of the letter which crosses the descender from left to right, it indicates *pro* (6218);

the superior *t* after *w* indicates *with* (38); after *b*, *bat* (1007);

an *h* is crossed on two occasions, one to indicate *her* (*hertily*, 616), the other apparently to indicate *ch* or *che* (*biseche*, 4074);

the tittle (abbreviation bar, suspension mark) is used to indicate *m* (295), *n* (10) (rarely *en*, as in 786), or *e* (*geyne*, 300); it is also used in *ihu* (*Jhesu*, 84);

in only two instances (5593 and 5600) an abbreviation that resembles a stylized supralinear one-lobed *a* stands for *ur*;

in only one case a different stylized supralinear *a* (a serrated line) stands for *ra* (*grace*, 5565)

a long *s* with a recurved stroke springing to the right from the height of an *m* and crossing below from right to left indicates *ser* (5605);

otiose flourishes on final *s* (1405) and *t* (3041) have been ignored.

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V. Documents

Versified examples of actual documents were not unusual in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century French poetry, but Charles is remarkable among writers of English poetry for the number and formality of his pseudo-documents. For a

discussion of all the documents in the work, see Camargo, 98–106. Excellent sources for similar documents in English, French, and Latin are available in print: Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, Champollion-Figeac, Rymer, etc. The following documents and references are provided in order to facilitate comparison of Charles's fictionalized documents with actual documents of the period.

Lines

3–8 Royal letters patent changed very slowly indeed; though late, this patent issued by Henry VIII is entirely typical:

Henricus Octavus, Dei gratia Anglié, Francié et Hibernié Rex, Fidei Defensor et in terra Ecclesié Anglicané et Hibernicé Supremum Caput, omnibus ad quos presentes Litteré pervenerint, Salutem

Sciatis quod nos, de gratia nostra speciali, ac ex certa sciencia et mero motu nostris, dedimus et concessimus, ac per presentes damus et concedimus, dilecto et fideli servienti nostro Anthonio Denny militi, uni Generosorum Privaté Cameré nostré quandam annuitatem [*etc.*] . . .

(Hall, ed., pt. 1: "Diplomatic Documents," no. 51: letter patent, 1545).

The following (royal) letter, addressed to the bishop of Rochester, gives some taste of the kind of rhetoric Charles is imitating:

Reverend fader in God, right trusty and welbeloved, forasmoche as we, of our special grace, in consideracion of the trew and faithful service whiche our welbeloved servant Robert Barker hath doon unto us, have yeven and graunted unto him the place of a felawe within our College called the Kinges Halle in our university of Cambrige whiche ther shall next happen to be voyd by dethe resignacion, or any other wise; to have and enjoy the same place to the said Robert with all rights and dewtees therto apperteynyng, for terme of his lif. . . .

(Hall, ed., pt. 1: "Diplomatic Documents," no. 125: signet letter, 1476)

Champion suggests that Love's parliament is similar to those Charles's father Louis once presided over (*Vié*, 256; on Hoccleve's use of epistolary formulas, see Bentley, and Fenster and Erler, 168).

53 Royal English documents (including letters patent) and even ordinary letters written in Latin often close with such formulas; the Fr equivalent is *Donne*. Cf. the closing of a letter issued by Charles himself in 1413 concerning payment of an apothecary and a physician:

Donné à Blois, le V^e jour d'aoust, l'an de grace mil CCC et treize, par MS le duc en son conseil, où MS l'archvesque de Sens, le sire de Saint Chartrer et autres estoient. (De Laborde, no. 6227, 261)

See also Hall, pt. 1, nos. 92, 100, 101, and passim.

1548 In another fictionalized letter of challenge, Oton de Grandson's narrator challenges one of the most valiant fighters in the English host, John of Cornwall, to single combat in order to fulfill his wish for death yet maintain his honor ("Lectres closes," Piaget, 424-28).

2716-2813 This document differs from the letter patent with which the (extant) work opens, in that the superscription (which identifies the sender) and the address (i.e., salutation, which identifies the recipient) are in the reverse order. In addition, the patent closes with an attestation that the petition lacks; the patent is written in an older, royal form. The petition also differs from the letter that follows (2981ff.) in that the subscription (i.e., valediction) is transposed to the beginning of the letter (becoming a superscription). The arrangement of the petition is the more formal of the two (see Hall, 138-39; for petitions, see also *Legge Anglo-Norman Letters*). By way of contrast, Gower's "supplicacioun" to the same god is entirely lacking in the proper formulas (CA 8.2210ff.).

2766-72 Hall includes a much less flowery petition in his *Formula Book* (pt. 1, no. 126 [1462]).

2984 The letter begins in the standard way:

Most excellent Christen Kyng and my moost redoubted souveraine liege lord; in as humble and obeysaunt maner as eny subject can or may doo to his souveraine, I recommaund me to your moost noble and benyng grace. . . .
(Hall, pt. 1, no. 162: Letter to Henry VII, 1489-93; see Camargo, 103-4).

3038 The formula itself is unremarkable:

Mon tressovereign et tresgraciouse seignour, luy Tout-Puissant Dieu vous gouverne toutdys en vostres tresjoyeuses honours et bone prosperite, longe a durer.

(Hall, pt. 1, no. 160: Letter to the King, 1403)

3042 Cf. the following closing of an actual letter addressed to Richard II: Escripte a vostre ville de B, le xxj jour d'aprylle, ou nous sumes attendantz graciouses nouvelles de vostre honorable aryvaille [etc.]

De par P la Vache et R Waldene a Roy Richarde.
(Legge, *Letters*, 72, 1395).

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Index of First Lines

*(For roundels the whole refrain is included;
for all the French poems, see
"Table des incipits," Champion, 2.631-46.)*

- B44 A, Daunger, here y cast to thee my gloue
 B88 Aftir wyntir, the veer with foylis grene
 R55 A ladies hert forto want pite,
 Hit is to fowle ageyne nature,
 That in so benygne a figure,
 B36 Alak! y kan yow nethir loue nor may
 B55 Allas! allas! how is hit heth gen entresse
 B57 Allas, Deth, who made thee so hardy
 B91 Allas! how euyr kouthe þe God of Kynde
 B115 Allas, Madame, what maner strijf
 B76 Allas sir! allas sir! pardoun me,
 B13 Alle be hit so y selde haue of yow sight,
 B22 Alle be that of my fare or sely case
 R64 Alle desolat from ioy or hertis hele,
 I yow biseche, or þat y to yow write,
 R90 Almes yowre mercy me, my swete,
 And make me yowre bedeman,
 R71 A, lo, myn hert, what tolde y the?
 —And thou seide, "Twissh, let me alone!"—
 B59 Alone am y and wille to be alone
 B45 And, god, before the greef and gret ennoy good
 R29 And so be now that y my purpos lesse,
 Certis, y haue desert hit wil wherfore,
 R53 A Pak, a pak, madame, my lode alight,
 Forwhi, allas! y bere to hevy lo,
 R30 As by the purchas of myn eyen tayne
 In servyng yow, myn hertis fayre mastres,
 B121 As for farewell! farewell! farewell! farewell!
 R20 As for the gyft ye haue vnto me geve,
 I thanke yow lo in alle that in me is,
 R26 As for yowre prayes yn fame þat is vp bore
 Ay growyng fresshe vnto yowre gret honour,
 R92 As he that no thing may profite,
 What do y now but wayle and crie
 B49 As in writyng y putt haue my wisshis
 B2 As plesith yow yowre eyen to pressen
 R50 At nede the frendis preven what þei be

- In eche a werk as stondith matere.
- B46 At the short game of tablis forto play
 R68 A Wel! myn hert, but wol ye not ben wise?
 Bi verry God, y drede ye wille aby
- B83 Baladis, songis, and complayntis—
 R88 Be nyse, myn hert, as purse is of an ay,
 And y shal loke þat no man come þe while.
 R22 Bewar! y rede yow, loke here not vpon
 The goodly fayre that y loue feithfully,
 R7 Bi God but oon my verry plesaunt Iay,
 Myn hert even fulle is of gladnes
 B50 Bi God of Loue comaundid lo am y
 B26 Brennyng-Desire-to-see-my-fayre-maystres
 B84 But for bi cause that deynte lo is leef
 B37 Bvt late agoo went y my hert to se
- R12 Comaunde me what ye wille in everi wise
 To me that am yowre sely, poore seruaunt
 B80 Comfort and y thus went in hondis tayne
 B90 Constraynt of payne, þouȝt, & hevynes
- B18 Displesere, Thought, Wrath, Woo, ne Hevynes,
- R60 Fare wel, fare wel, my lady and maystres!
 Fare wel, þat y most loue and evir shalle!
 R51 Fleth the shott of Swete Regard,
 Myn hert, without thou willist forto day,
 B60 For dedy lijf, my lyvy deth y wite
 B54 For loue of god, as kepith Remembraunce
 R103 For Ipocras nor yet Galien
 Ne may of me the woofulle woundis cure,
 R34 Forto biholde the bewte and manere
 Of yow, myn hertis lady and maystres,
 R32 Forseek in woo and fer from ioyous hele
 Wherin alle welthe doth most to me habounde,
 B78 For which that Loue anoon fulle ryally
 B9 Fresshe Bewte, riche of yowthe & lustynes,
- R65 God, of thi grace, the good sowle now pardon
 Of hir that was my maystres & norice
 R45 Go forth thi way, my feithfulle Deservance,
 On that thow owist me thyn obeysaunce
 Streight vnto the ioyous, fresshe manere
 B3 Gret perille is in hasty biholdyng

- R25 Had y as moche of worldly goodis
As ther is trouthe of loue in me
- B109 Hadde y hertis a thousand, þou3and score
- B108 Half in dispeyre—not half, but clene dispeyrid
- R24 Hit is doon. Ther is no more to say.
Myn hert departid is fro me
- B28 Hoffa howe, myn hert! the schepe off Freche Teydyng
- B21 Honure and prays as mot to him habound
- B111 Honure, ioy, helthe, and plesaunce
- B41 Hope hath me now fresshe, gladsum tidyng brou3t
- B34 How, how, myn hert! opyn þe gate of Thought
- B4 How may he him diffende, þe pouer hert
- R41 If hit plese yow yowre cossis forto selle
I redy am here forto bie hem welle
Which geue yow shalle myn hert as in morgage
- B39 If y koude make my wanton wisshis flee
- R13 If so were that ye knowe my woo trewly,
Mi verri gladdist remembrance
- B67 I Haue the obit of my lady dere
- B73 I Here many peple playne
- B24 In louers paradise as them among
- B58 In slepe ben leyd alle song, daunce, or disport
- B70 In the Forest of Noyous Hevynes
- R27 In thought, in wisshis, and in dremes soft,
God wot how that y se yow nyght & day
- R37 I prayse no thing these cossis Dowche
Whiche geue are for a countenance
- R46 I put my silf vnto yowre mercy lo,
Moost goodly fayre, most replete of bounte
- R9 Is oon swete look of yowre eyen tayne
Which Wikkid Speche doth fro me refrayne
As wisshith hit me at lest as often loo
- R4 Is she not fulle of alle goodly manere,
The which y loue in my most feithful wise?
- B69 I Was long tyme oon of the company
- B105 I, wrecche, fulfillid of þou3t and hevynes
- B102 I yelde my silf to yow! Saue me my lijf!
- B116 Lende me yowre praty mouth, Madame.
- R43 Logge me, dere hert, in yowre armys tayne
And geve me so a swete cosse two or thre
- R21 Madame, as longe as hit doth plese yow ay
To doon me lyue in þis paynfulle manere
- B10 Madame, a trouthe not wot y what to say

- B16 Madame, ye ought welle know, to my semyng
R58 Madame, y wold, bi God alone,
How that myn hert were in yowre sleue
R57 My gostly fadir, y me confesse,
First to God and then to yow
R42 My loue and lady whom y most desere,
Mi recomfort, my hertis eleccioun
R38 My loue only, my ioy and my maystres,
Syn y may not ben longe with yow present
B27 Myn hert hath sent abowt, ye, fer and nere
B33 Myn hert, if so that y good tidyng here
R93 Myn hert, thou fondis, bi this light,
To fle from Lovis company.
B106 My paynyd gost enforsith me complayne
B43 My poore hert bicomen is hermyte
R14 Mi verry ioy and most parfit plesere,
Whiche are of me and alle y haue maystres
R52 My wele, my ioy, my loue, and my lady,
Which y most loue and shalle wher þat y go
B15 My wille, my loue, my verry sorse of blis
B107 Mi woful hert þat slepis lo in care
R63 More speche, Madame, is of yowre goodlynes
Then of Aleyne or yet Penolope
B86 More then body, hert, good, and servise
R15 More then the deth nys thyng vnto me leef,
Syn recomfort vnto my karfulle greef
May noon be found to ioy my woofulle hert
B1 Most goodly fayre aboue alle þo lyuyng
B32 Most goodly fayre, as lust hit yow to here
R17 Most goodly fayre, if hit were yowre plesere
So moche forto enriche yowre servaunt here
Of recomfort, of ioy, and of gladnes
B19 Most goodly yong, O plesaunt debonayre
R39 Nar that y drede displezen yow only,
I passyng fayne wold stele here, verily,
A pryvy Cosse of yow, myn hertis swete
B7 Neuyr more to loue, oft haue y thought
R49 Not oft y prayse, but blame, as in substaunce,
Alle the welthe of lovis paynful blis
B6 Not long agoo y hyed me apase
B29 Now drede y Daungere nor yet noon of his
R2 Now holde him silf from loue, let se þat may,
For, as for me, y may kepe me no more
R8 Now say me lo myn hert, what is þi reed?
Ne is hit best y to my lady goo

- B14 Now what tidyng, my lady & mastres?
 B42 Not wot y now what wise to bere my chere
- R102 O blesse, o blesse que porrar obler
 Alle heuy thought þat bryngith in distres
- B31 O Come to me, sum Gladsum Tidyng newe
 B30 O fayre, y wot ye haue in remembraunce
 R89 O Fayre madame, alleþough þat þer be noon
 That for him silf kan speke so yvil as y
- R56 O Fayre madame, Crist wold ye knew my payne,
 With alle my thought and bisy remembraunce
 Which my poore hert hath in governaunce
- B101 O fayre madame, if so ye dare not loo
 R61 O Fayre madame, no more vnto me write,
 For such writyng hit causith but dilayes
- B5 O fayre Madame, yowre goodlii lookis spare
 B85 Of fayre most fayre, as verry sorse & welle
 B110 O Fayrist flowre, O flowre of flowris alle
 B118 O Fy, Fortune, fy! þi dissayt and skorne
 R70 O fy, Loue, fy! amende yowre gouernaunce!
 Ye are to townysshe, bi this book.
- B40 O Fortune, dost thou my deth conspyre?
 B82 Of Passid Tyme the plaster of No Care
 B63 Ofte in my thought fulle besily haue y sought
 R6 O God, how that she lokith verry fayre,
 The goodly swete, my very hertis blis
- R59 O God, so as hit enioyeth me
 Forto bithynke my ladies goodlihed
- B94 O Goodly fayre, sith y haue doon & shalle
 R16 O Goodly fayre, which y most loue and drede,
 Such is myn happe, such grace is me ordeynyd
 [yn seche hape and grace as have y monyd]
- B89 O good swet hert, my ioy and sovl plesaunce
 B103 O hert, more hard then roche of any stoon
 B112 O lo, myn hert, syn ye wol gone yowre way
 B95 Oppressid with thought, langoure, & hevynes
 B23 O royalle Hope, to long y se the slepe!
 B97 O sely Ankir, that in thi selle
 B25 O stedfast Trouthe, displaye thi baner!
 B38 O Swete Thought, y neuyr in no wise
 B74 O Woofulle hert, forcast with heuynes
- B71 Plesaunt Bewte had woundid sore myn hert
 B117 Presence of yow hit causith my comfort
- R18 Refresshe the castelle of my poore hert

- With sum lyvyng of ioy or of plesaunce
 B119 Retorne, for shame, retorne, retorne, ageyne!
 B56 Right as y herde this othir day tofore
 R33 Right ny myn hert with my bosom lo
 I haue yputt a cosse of gret plesere
 B87 Right yongly fayre, replet with goodlihed
- B62 Shulde y me make a lady newe? Fy! Fy!
 B68 Syn cursid deth hath taken my maystres
 B96 Syn hit is so we nedis must depart
 R23 Syn y may not askape me fer nor nere
 As from the wrath of Kare and Hevynes
 R19 Syn Loue hath cast me banysshe euerydelle
 Out of his hous, for now and euymore
 B12 Syn that y absent am thus from yow fare
 B114 Syn that y am yowre, haue ben, & shalle
 R5 Syn that y haue a nounparalle maystres
 The which hath hool my service & myn hert
 B120 So fresshe bewte, so moche goodlynes
 R94 Svm tyme y was a poore serviture
 In Louys court and had a gouernaunce.
- R35 Take, take this cosse atonys! atonys! my hert,
 That thee presentid is of thi maystres
 R40 The gret disese of seekfulle anoyaunce
 Which causith oft the penaunt sore to playne
 R54 The mede is flowe, the grace is goon,
 The hert is chaungid from his place.
 B51 The next tyme, my lady and mastres
 R69 The smylyng mouth and laughyng eyen gray,
 The brestis rounde and long, smal armys twayne
 B53 This Dyane day, the first in moneth of May
 B11 This fer from yow am y, lady mastres
 B17 This ioyous tyme, this fresshe cesoun of May
 B65 The ioly tyme, the first, fresshe day of May
 B92 The plesaunt lemys of yowre eyen clere
 B81 The rewler of this habitacioun
 B100 Ther nys in me comfort of gladnes or
 B66 The secund day of fayre, fresshe lusty May
 B93 This long dilay, this hope without comfort
 R1 This May that Loue not lusten forto slepe
 But doth his folke in nyse conseitis wake
 R11 This monthe of May, withouten pere princesse
 The sovl plesere of alle myn hope & thou3t
 R62 This tyme when louers alþermost defie
 Eche heuy thought as ferforth as þei may

- R44 Though Daunger haue the speche biraft me here
 Of yow, most fayre, withouten any pere,
 Thorough the purchas of cursid false Envy
- R87 Thou shalt no more rewle me, my hert.
 I wol no more be to thee thral
- B61 Toforne Loue haue y pleyd at the chesse
- B48 To longe (for shame!) and alle to longe trewly
- R31 To shewe that y haue not forgotten yow
 But redy am to serue yow, lady dere
- B47 Welcome and yit more welcome, bi þis light
- B98 Welcome, my ioy! Welcome, myn hertis ese!
- R91 Wel, wanton ey, but must ye nedis pley?
 Yowre lokis nyse, ye let hem renne to wide.
- B72 Whan fresshe Phebus, day of Seynt Valentyne
- B52 WHat menyst þou, Hope? dost þou me skoffe & skorne?
- R3 What so be that y say, parde,
 Of Loue or of his gret rigure
- R67 When me bithought is of my ladi dere,
 The bewte, shappe, and goodli gouernaunce
- B8 When y am leyd to slepe as for a stound
- B20 When y last partid fro myn hertis swete
- B64 WHen y revolve in my remembraunce
- B77 When Loue had welle parceyvid myn entent
- B79 When that y had myn hert and my quyttaunce
- B75 WHen that next approchen gan the fest
- R66 Wherefore, wherefore make ye preuayes? whi?
 Me thynke þei nede not spoken ben so oft
- R36 Whi loue y yow so moche (how may þis be?)
 And hate so moche myn hert? (þis wold y lere)
- R10 Who so biholdith wel as with my eye
 Mi verry lady and my sul maystres
- B99 With axcesse shake, forsekid, & forfaynt
- B113 WItH hert, body, and my hool puysshauce
- B35 Within the tresoure haue y of my thought
- R28 With my trewe hert, content of ioy & wele,
 Mi fayre maystres, myn hertis sovl desere
- R47 Ye are to moche as in my dette, madame,
 Ye owe me, swete, to many cossis dere
- B104 Yowre goodlihed, myn hertis lady dere
- R48 Yowre mouth hit saith me, "Bas me, bas, swet!"
 When that y yow bihold, this semeth me.

§

Index of Ballade Refrains

*Roundel refrains can be found in the Index of first lines.
For a Table of Refrains of the French ballades,
see Poirion, Le Lexique, 151-53.*

Ballades

- B40 Alas, alas! and is this not ynough?
 B87 Allas! how long wil ye straunge in pis wise?
 B9 Alle thewis goode this hath my lady dere.
 B59 Alone y lyue, an ofcast creature.
 B28 And hool tresoure of my worldly gladnes.
 B54 And ye to ben my lady and maystres.
 B55 And saith how that his lijf doth him ennoy.
 B81 And there to bide vnto that howre y day.
 B43 And yet y say him how it is foly.
 B19 As bi the mowth y lever had yow told.
 B34 As euyrmore a faithfull kynde maystres.
 B86 As for a while it shulde suffisen me.
 B39 As for my souereyn lady and maystres.
 B32 As in the Cofir of my remembraunce.
 B27 As in the Prison of Grevous Displesaunce.
 B6 As me reportid hath myn eyen twayne.
 B11 As moche of weele as y haue displesaunce.
 B96 As take myn hert and lete yowris bide with me.
 B65 As that tyme was myn hap and aventure.
 B77 As the request thou hast to me bisought.
 B3 As well to foolis as vnto folkis wise.
- B92 But causeles to complayne, it am not y.
 B93 But for eche weele a thousand woo agayne.
 B41 But Ihesu graunt that hit may sone bifalle.
 B14 But in liche wise, let se, aqyutith yow.
 B109 But where þat fortune gyde me fer or nere,
 Hit besse, swet hert, to me yowre pouer man.
 B100 But wikkid folke therof muste say amys!
- B29 For God of Loue woll helpe me in my nede.
 B4 For ther nys wight may stond geyne þer pussshaunce.
 B12 Forto aslake my gret aduersite.
 B76 Forwhi y am fulle ferre from that purpos!

- B83 Forwhi y fynde him rollid in No Care.
 B52 For whoo that absent is, is woobigoon.
 B58 For without hir of nought now lyue y here.
- B63 God haue hir sowle, y kan no bettir say.
 B97 Go, dul complaynt, my lady þis report.
 B22 God wot in what aforecursid parte.
- B20 Hit nys but even of Loue myracle noo
 B120 How may it be owt sleying me in payne?
- B25 I biseche God acursid mote they dey
 B102 If euyr well ye were on loue bithought.
 B30 If so that tyme or nede hit lust requere.
 B114 If þat it were as y koude wisshe it were.
 B35 In abidyng my gladsom in good hope.
 B45 In at the wyndowes of my derkid eyene.
 B99 In his avmferse me turnyth in disese.
 B57 In payne, sorowe, and woofull aventure.
 B101 In spite of Daunger and his affynyte.
 B53 In tyme that y, afore this day, haue sayne.
 B36 In trust that y shall se yow hastily.
 B15 In yow, if so y durst it to yow sayne.
- B85 Me forto saue or do me payne or spille.
 B66 Me thynke y haue deservid not wherfore."
 B115 Me thynkith yowre eyen "mercy" seith.
 B7 Myn hert, the whiche that maystir is of me.
 B2 Myn only ioye and souereyne hertis blis
- B118 Nor yet, y trust, heraftir shalt þou not!
- B94 O good swete hert, haue me not in disdayne.
 B21 Only for loue and feithfull trewe servyng.
 B24 Only to spel me this in heuynes.
 B56 O sende me tidying, good Seynt Gabriel!
 B60 O wofull wrecche! O wrecche, lesse onys thi speche!
 B117 Owt secund choys or on vnto me levir.
- B62 Right as the fenyx lyveth withouten ayre.
 B42 Right humbly with all myn hool puysshauce.
- B13 Saue only this, the verry deth aloon.
 B75 Syn geyne the strok of deth ther is no cure?
 B10 Syn hit is so that y am from yow fare
 B1 So ben ye sowl my lady and maystres

- B84 Take them aworth y pray yow alle among
 B47 Teys yow to whom y loue am and no moo.
 B69 That all is broke and newe to make ayen.
 B108 That euyr y knew Loue or his servise.
 B33 That faithfully she doth hir silf aquyte.
 B89 That giltles sleth me yowre disdayne.
 B90 That in my resoun fynde yow hard as stoon.
 B121 That mawgre me hit doth my wele biwray.
 B79 That of wepyng y koude me not restrayne.
 B106 Thus pitously my deth ye do me contryve!
 B64 That this world nys but even a thyng in vayne.
 B103 That trouthe may not rewarde me in my right!
 B73 The amverse of his weele, certeyne.
 B88 The change of yowre mystrust kan y not se.
 B17 The contrary of all my wrecchid wille.
 B18 The grettist good that may to me bifalle.
 B67 The hool tresoure of all worldly blys.
 B37 The hool tresoure of louys gret riches.
 B70 The man forlost that wot not where he goth.
 B16 The small plesere that y haue to me kaught.
 B82 The which is callid Lovis Malady.
 B51 This is a thyng that gretly loo y drede!
 B8 This is my slepe yfalle into decay.
 B48 This ioly tyme, this fresshe first day of May.
 B49 Thorough false conspire of sum vnhappy wight.
 B26 Thus calle y for yowre socoure pitously.
 B68 To alle that trewly loue, where so they are.
 B78 To doon withall what that y wolde, trewly.
 B116 Toforne or ye it ocupie.
 B104 To hit like yow enjoy me in sum wise.
 B95 To knowe the fyn lo þis is my request.
 B38 To that ye lust me newe comfort provide.

 B72 Vpon my bed so hard of Newous Thought.

 B98 Welcome, my leche, me forto sle or saue!
 B110 What may y more? y sory am þerfore.
 B113 Whatsoeuyr be seid or thought.
 B31 When she me gafe this nãme, as loo, "My loue.
 B119 When ye are where? now where as ye shulde be.
 B91 Where bi my lijf ye wynne may my servise.
 B23 Wherefore—alak!—now faylith him not at nede.
 B80 Which callid is the Castell of No Care.
 B50 Which y shall kepe to Deth me hath assaylid.
 B5 Which y haue for yowre plesaunt acqeyntaunce.
 B46 Wynne the game withouten more dowtaunce.

- B111 With hert, body, my litill good, and all!
 B107 Without departyng all hir lyvis space!
 B44 Without so be thou yelde thee to ben trewe
 B61 Without so be y make a lady newe.
 B71 Without so be the wounde renewe agayn.
 B105 Woo for eche wille and for eche ioy a sorow.
- B74 Yet with the deth almes me, pore wreche.
 B112 Ye wote my wele. What shulde y wordis more?

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Textual Notes

Readings from Steele's text are identified by an S. Emendations surrounded by <> change an extant reading; those surrounded by [] supply something missing. Where an entire word has been supplied, the addition is explained in the explanatory notes but not recorded here. Word divisions are noted only when they are uncommon (see S&D and my corrections of their edition for MS word division). Scribal revisions are identified, where possible, as the work of the main scribe, [Revisor] A, or [Revisor] B.

- 22 to] *te*
 26 Desdayn] *daunger* crossed out, *desdayn* in inner margin
 47 we] *we* interlined above caret B
 61 hyt ys] interlined above caret B
 62 athanke] *a* interlined above caret B
 71 worthy] *worth*
 77 Sterve] *Deserue*
 83 deserue] *deseue*
 82–83 In reverse order, marked for inversion
 98 oon] *noon*
 102 gyven] *gyve* in
 106 sche dethe] *they do* crossed out, *sche dethe* interlined B
 107 so] *so* interlined above caret B
 116 hyt] *hyt* interlined above caret, followed by *þe* crossed out B
 125 ther] written over erasure [*thine* S]
 132 ressayue] *?resfayue*
 133 kanst] caret followed by *cast* crossed out, *kanst* in inner margin followed by caret B
 137 scol] *sool*
 139 al] interlined above caret B
 152–53 In reverse order, marked for inversion
 198 y] *he* crossed out, followed by *y* interlined above caret B
 243 sheweth] *shewe*
 267 straunge] *yd* written over *e*, separated from following *þ* by
 hairstroke
 277 straunged] *d* added above line
 287 straunged] *d* added above line
 321 wot] *out*
 404 of] interlined above caret B
 410 not] interlined above caret B
 417 welle] caret followed by *loue* crossed out; *welle* in inner margin above caret B
 424 withouten] *without*
 447–48 In reverse order, marked for inversion
 508 hathē] caret followed by *lith* crossed out; *hathe* in inner margin B
 513 myssyn] tittle over *n*
 585 ay] interlined over caret before *lo*, crossed out B
 593 me] *my*
 598 yt] *yt* interlined above caret following *lo*, crossed out B
 604 as] interlined above caret B
 615 lady mastres] *lady & mastres*; *&* unfinished, crossed out
 656 yowre] *yow*
 756 benwaylyd] *ben* followed by caret; *wayd* crossed out; caret followed by *waylyd* in outer margin B
 756 will they] *haue y*
 780 caret followed by *frowarde and contrary* in outer margin, erased B
 781 *For when y payne then she for laughtir grent* erased, *that he ys*

- glad to se m[e] thys ffor schente in outer margin. *k* crossed out after *ys*; *e* of *me* trimmed off B
- 782 reherse] *reresse*
- 791 glad] *glade*, *e* erased
- 793 faith[ful] *faith*
- 799 loo] *noo* written over *lo(o)*
- 809 ditto
- 819 ditto
- 823 ditto
- 812 y] interlined above caret B
- 821 soo] written over erasure by same hand that corrected to *noo* above; original word not visible
- 875 my] *me*
- 876 y trvst] caret after *him*; caret followed by *y trust* in outer margin B
- 885 Ageyne daungere which hath me in manauce erased; *n* with daunger *falyn* at *destance* in outer margin; first letters trimmed off B
- 888 arise] *arises*; final *s* added in later hand, also to all the rhymes except those already ending in *s*, throughout the poem
- 895 plesere daungere hath him onycrepe erased [Of remaining]; *plesser daunger hathe hym pot to wepe* in outer margin; first word may have been trimmed off B
- 904 krost off peyes] line left incomplete, phrase added by A
- 905 of] *off*, second *f* added in later hand
- 937 ayde] *aye*
- 940 so] interlined over caret before *happe* B
- 973 see] interlined over caret before *my* B
- 997 evene] *hevene*
- 997 al onewhi] *alone whi*
- 1016 promysse] *sse* apparently added in another hand
- 1037 ffa howe, for in þe shappe of fresshen glad tidyng erased (HO left to stand), *myn hert the schepe off glad ffreche teydyng* above cross in outer margin; *glad* crossed out; beginning of marginal line trimmed off B
- 1052 thee] written over erasure (?*thy*)
- 1057 thow written over erasure; original contained *y* and ended in *t* [*my hert S*] A
- 1057 dost kepe thy] *doth kepe his*
- 1060 line written over erasure
- 1065 oure] *youre*
- 1068 thow] *hert*
- 1076 NOT] *Now*
- 1093 hard[i]nesse] *hardnesse*
- 1097 A] followed by *y*, erased
- 1124 this] *his*
- 1127 flaterer] *flaterere*
- 1158 sche] *When* followed by caret; *sche* in outer margin above caret B
- 1236 out] *at*
- 1265 levting] *tittle* and perhaps more of the word written over erasure
- 1270 brought] *bought*, *r* interlined above caret B
- 1281 may] *my*
- 1297 Als] *Also*
- 1343 fo] erased
- 1354 noon] *noo*
- 1356 knowith] *know* followed by superscript *t* and hairstroke
- 1361 me] *me sum*
- 1371 them] *then* altered to *them*
- 1402 hir] *him*
- 1404 hir] *him*
- 1417 leve] caret followed by *ben*, crossed out; *leve* in outer margin followed by caret B
- 1431 on] /on/ written over (probably 3 letter) erasure
- 1435 lefft] *fft* written over erasure A
- 1469 Fortune] *Fortyme*
- 1480 keppe] *k* and final *e* apparently altered in black ink

- 1481 zeys] caret followed by *As*, *A* erased, *zeys* in inner margin B
- 1490 Thys] *ffer may*, *ffer* crossed out, *thys* in inner margin B
- 1503 a reklesse] *and rekkeles*; *nd rekkeles* erased; *reklesse* in top margin; *As a reklesse sso leve y in pensir*, in outer margin, erased
- 1519 wode] caret followed by *end*, crossed out, *wode* in outer margin above caret B
- 1524 worth] *worthi*
- 1527 al] interlined above caret B
- 1540 was] *as* written over longer (?4 letter) erasure
- 1542 lace] *ce* written over erasure by main scribe
- 1553 Onwhy] *On whych*, *ch* erased
- 1580 as] *a*, *s* interlined above caret B
- 1583 oure] *yowre*
- 1584 oure] *yowre*
- 1597 line unfinished
- 1604 luste] *lust*
- 1626 thay ben] written over erasure A
- 1634 this] *his*
- 1646 wayith] *wayfith*
- 1701 the] written over erasure
- 1739 ioyis] *ioy*
- 1771 wache] *wache* interlined above caret followed by *wassayle* [left to stand] B
- 1801 vnaspide] *vnspide*
- 1807 out] *without*, *wit* crossed out, *hout* left to stand
- 1866 he] *she*
- 1958 woo] first *o* altered from *h* by erasure of ascender and descender
- 1966 line unfinished
- 1967 with] caret followed by *and* underlined; *with* in margin, followed by caret B
- 1984 welle] *welle and*, *and* erased
- 1985 tay] *tayne*, *ne* erased
- 1990 Als] *s* and top of *l* written over erasure
- 2007 Had] *haddist*, *dist* erased
- 2007 taken] followed by *yet*, erased
- 2009 take] *taken*, *n* erased
- 2010 this] written over erasure [*has* S]
- 2012 out] *without*, *wit* erased, *hout* left to stand
- 2018 Out] *without*, *wit* erased, *hout* left to stand
- 2018 in] interlined above caret B
- 2023 offens] *offensis*, *is* erased
- 2039 care] caret followed by *care*, crossed out; *cave* (or *cane*) in margin, followed by caret B
- 2057 Alone] *Aone*
- 2072 and] *are*, *re* overwritten with *d*, tittle added over *a*, main scribe
- 2109 Refrain omitted
- 2141 Fy! Fy!] *ffy ffy* added [over plummert marking S] A
- 2145 als] written over erasure [*alas* S]
- 2165 wayffyd] *wayy*d underlined, *wayffyd* in inner margin B
- 2195 Yit] *Hit*
- 2230 expelle] *excelle*
- 2245 that] interlined above caret B
- 2248 schesse] caret followed by *here*, crossed out; *schesse* in outer margin followed by caret B
- 2250 y onto] *vnto*, *v* given a descender to make *y*, *n* erased; *on* followed by caret added above erasure
- 2302 were] *was*
- 2308 hit] *hir*
- 2320 the] *hir*
- 2347 hit] *him*
- 2382 Then] *That*
- 2386 As feithfully] *As feithfully as feithfully*
- 2400 exylid] *ylid* written over erasure
- 2428 hertily] *hertly*
- 2435 Him axyng where without] written over erasure by main scribe

- 2463 bottyne] added in a different hand
- 2465 Me neye] *Myn eye*, tittle interlined over first *e* above caret
- 2492 rath] *r* smudged, but clear, *v* written over it and tittle over *a*, later, in plummet
- 2508 pechere] left to stand; *pevechere* in inner margin B
- 2519 thou] *y*
- 2534 at] *as*
- 2538 hir] *hit*
- 2566 thi] *on thi*
- 2593 cloth] *th* written over erasure [*re S*]
- 2594 the] *e* written over erasure [*thi S*]; hairstroke added to separate *e* from following *c*
- 2656 left] *lost*
- 2704 rekwere by fayre rekkwere] *rekwere* by *fayre speche*; *speche* erased; *rekwere* crossed out; *rekkwer* in outer margin; *signe de renvoi* in inner margin
- 2734 here] *h* written over erasure in different hand
- 2741 hym forto slee and makke a porre] *hym* and *ke a porre* written over erasures in a different hand
- 2747 gladnes] written over erasure by main scribe
- 2769 wothe] *the* written over *rke* in different hand
- 2870 ner] *nor*
- 2887 had] *hath*
- 2912 nerbeles yit] *nerbeles hit*; *beles* written over erasure, second *e* written above unique form of *þ*
- 2938 selvyn] tittle over *n*
- 2939 manar] *ar* written over erasure
- 2957 Refrain line erased
- 2992 you] *me*
- 3007 my] *y*
- 3011 withouten] *without*
- 3054 espy] *es* written over *s*, erased
- 3060 thare] *are* written over erasure A
- 3062 thay square] written over erasure A
- 3078 Or] *For*
- 3082 disyoentis] top of (first) *s* and *yoentis* written over erasure by A; *antys* in inner margin B
- 3084 now detayntis] written over erasure A
- 3125 forthe] caret followed by *for*, crossed out lightly, *forthe* in outer margin B
- 3146 nor] tittle added before *or* with caret
- 3147 sech] written over (3-letter) erasure A
- 3163 he] written over erasure ending in *-s* A
- 3163 hers] *here*
- 3190 trowthe be] written over erasure A
- 3241 ye] *she*
- 3250 <AS>] *Is*
- 3269 wel as] interlined above caret B
- 3270 my] interlined above caret B
- 3271 a] interlined above caret B
- 3271 and hvug] *and* interlined above caret; *hvug* written after *larges* for lack of space B
- 3272 plesaunce] *plesaunt*
- 3277 lokith] *lok* written over erasure
- 3285 al] interlined above caret B
- 3288 wrofft] added by A
- 3302 sparyng] *spayng*, *payn* written over erasure in different hand
- 3359 *Such is myn happe suche grace is me ordeynyd* erased; *yn seche hape and grace as have y wonyd* in outer margin B
- 3365 MS: *Suche is myn*
- 3371 MS: *Suche is myn*
- 3427 greve] *ve* written over erasure
- 3432 fol. 71r, though ruled, is blank
- 3471 enduryng] *endurng*, tittle and *g* written over erasure [*e S*]
- 3499 Line written over erasure by A
- 3503 prayes yn] written over erasure A

- 3512 mor valowre] written over erasure A
- 3531 hert content] *hert con* written over erasure by main scribe
- 3542 *If hit myght be as y koude wisse hit felle* left to stand; *signe de renvoi* in outer margin; *yf hyt wer as y weche hyt sydys felle* in lower margin preceded by *signe de renvoi* B
- 3545 lesse] *ss* written over *u* in different hand
- 3553 pese] *se* added by A
- 3554 steffen thus] written over erasure A
- 3567 why as] interlined above caret B
- 3568 wekys] interlined above caret B
- 3588 to on] interlined above caret
- 3601 within] *with*
- 3625 forbere] followed by *y*, erased
- 3652 moche *with*] written over erasure [final letter *c* or *e*] A; *you* interlined above caret
- 3699 alls] *all is*; *is* erased; *s* added to *-all* (crossed double *l*)
- 3731 weisly] *e* added above line, with caret B
- 3732 partage] *portage*
- 3738 *Dane (Daue)* or *Cane (Caue)* written in outer margin by B
- 3745 nare] written over erasure A
- 3746 what] written over erasure A
- 3777 therin] *in*
- 3784 Deseraunce] *Deservaunce*
- 3814 kepe] followed by word erased, probably *ye*
- 3826 here] written over erasure A
- 3859 thy] *the*
- 3864 own] written over erasure A
- 3936 her] *hem*
- 4007 on to] written over erasure A
- 4027 dryffte] written over erasure A
- 4028 Line written over erasure A
- 4074 biseche] *biseh* with line through ascender of *h*
- 4199–4200 Refrain cues run together on a single line: *Be nyse and y*
- 4201 a nay] *an ay*
- 4229 now as] *nowis*
- 4263 fondist] *fondis*
- 4290 fols. 100r–102r: Roundels 95–99 numbered but never copied; space (blank leaves) left for Roundels 100–101
- 4305 NOr] *FOr*
- 4322 Isend] *I send, I* written over erasure
- 4323 but yt ys gon] *t yt ys g* written over erasure A
- 4325 the myghtty god I pray] part of *e* and *myghtty god I pray* written by A [no erasure visible]
- 4328 feode] *fedde*
- 4340 O name two] *O name t* written over erasure [of S] A
- 4344 make a keverkope] *e a keverkope* written over erasure A
- 4349 lo] *so*
- 4353 but] written over erasure [lo S] A
- 4354 loue is] *lovis*
- 4366 ensewid] *i* interlined above caret B
- 4391 her no] written over erasure by A; partial virgule left after *nys* and another after first *no*
- 4402 noder worthe] written over erasure A
- 4418 hir] *hirid*
- 4422 Renomyd] *Remomyd*
- 4426 iustys] *ys* written over erasure
- 4435 man] followed by *y* erased
- 4441 within] *with*
- 4477 that] *ha* written over erasure
- 4516 Owt] *Owt owt*
- 4539 straynyng] *strayng*
- 4570 ye] *yow*
- 4571 greves haue] *haue greves*, marked for inversion
- 4575 nis] *is*
- 4588 schore] written over erasure A

- 4630 servaunts] *servaunt*
 4671 So smothe ygrowe] *So moche y growe* left to stand, *so smothe y* in outer margin A
 4704 oft þen loue] *oft þen* written beyond bounding line, *loue* written beneath *þen* for lack of space
 4718 noyous lese] *noyouslesse*
 4724 an hire] *am hir*
 4745 prewdent] written over erasure A
 4786 thow] *how*
 4798 symplenesse] *symplesse*
 4851 riches] *riche*
 4854 shift] *shith*
 4906 sche] *suche, su* erased, *s* written over erasure A
 4976 sche] *what* followed by caret; *sche* in inner margin after caret B
 4988 forgeth] *forgoth*
 5007 *some at ful right vary straunge* erased, *weche that wrost wer yn a rang* in outer margin; final *e* probably trimmed off B
 5031 ston] *son*
 5063 she] *y*
 5077 whyll] *bill* erased, *whyll* written after erasure B
 5080 sekith] *seith*
 5085 about] *bowt*
 5088 hide hide] last two words added, probably by main scribe
 5089 of] *oft, t* added in later hand
 5096 Owtseptē] corrected from *Owill septe* (tops of crossed *ll* erased)
 5108 and] *and* altered to *aynd*; long stroke of *y* written over second stroke of *n*, tittle added, in a different hand
 5124 y] interlined above caret B
 5142 not] *no*
 5167 yon] *any*
 5192 bosum] written over erasure by main scribe
 5211 noo] ?added later
 5218 I tho þe lesse me] *I tho þe lesse* and the first two strokes of *m* written over erasure [*e* written above *þ*, *lesse* squeezed between *þ* and *me*] A
 5232 yve] *tyve, t* added in later hand
 5234 is ther] written over longer erasure (which ended perhaps in *is* or *as*) A
 5236 Quod y] *y* written over erasure, perhaps *no*, picked up from previous line [*mo S*] A
 5259 sit] *set*
 5279 ye] *ie*
 5290 so cleyn] *c* of *cleyne* written over *o* of (a second) *so* erased; tittle erased
 5293 cawse] *sawse*
 5307 soore] written over erasure
 5308 you] caret followed by *ye*, crossed out; *you* below bottom line
 5365 bettir] *bett*
 5381 naue] *haue*
 5436–88 Large letters beginning stanzas on fols. 126v and 127r as well as 5520, 5528, and perhaps 5488 (where two *fs* are inserted over the guide letter) added in later hand. In 5480 the initial *H* is followed by (redundant) *o* in the same hand.
 5499 stoon] *oon* written over erasure [S]
 5557 As] *Is*
 5636 saine] *ine* written over erasure
 5661 is] *in*
 5711 so fer] *suffir; tofore*] *toforne*
 5718 to] followed by a dot at the height of the *o*, probably because the quill touched the parchment by mistake
 5722 vntend, yn] *vntendyn*
 5727 nad] *n* written over *h*, erased
 5738 diskewre] *dissewre*
 5752 nenysther] *nenyscher*
 5766 wantē] *wante*

- 5825 line omitted; written in outer margin by B, with horizontal line to indicate proper position as well as hand in left margin pointing to appropriate position
- 5945 disservith] *disseyvith*
- 5954 Piti] *putt*
- 5965 deserued] *deserue*
- 5988 fyre] *y* written over erasure in different hand, *f* and *r* touched up
- 6027 hem] *home*
- 6043 do contryve] *do me contryve*
- 6048 see] *flee*
- 6065 awake] *awke*
- 6080 Out] *Without*
- 6085 my] *hir* altered to *my* A
- 6096 thy] written over erasure A
- 6100 my] *hir* altered to *my* A
- 6167 me] written over erasure
- 6224 boystous] second *o* written over two minims
- 6264 Me] *Mi*
- 6293 wot] *ye* followed by caret; *wot* in margin, followed by caret B
- 6338 frame] *e* added above line with caret by A, *o* altered to *a*
- 6348 mercy seith] written over (longer) erasure
- 6349 them] *then*
- 6360 goodlihed] *goodlihod*
- 6396 of yow y mysse] written in different ink by main scribe
- 6423 scoffer] *coffer*
- 6451 as] *vs*
- 6463 I] *ye*
- 6475 to] interlined above caret B
- 6486 Large G (or S) in left margin ?
- 6492 alon] *as lo*, *s* erased, *n* added in darker ink by main scribe
- 6494 forgon] *forgo*, with *n* added in darker ink
- 6519 þei] written over erasure by main scribe
- 6530 Below the last line, a later writer has copied *To eft sone that* twice

Explanatory Notes

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| B | Ballade | Pity | Complaint unto Pity |
| R | Roundel | Rom | Romaunt of the Rose |
| E | English | SqT | Squire's Tale |
| Fr | French, etc. | SumT | Summoner's Tale |
| st. | stanza | T&C | Troilus and Criseyde |
| S&D | Steele and Day; St = Steele (i.e., vol. 1: text) | WBT | Wife of Bath's Tale |
| OED | Oxford English Dictionary | Wom Unc | Against Women Unconstant |
| MED | Middle English Dictionary | | |
| Chaucer: | | | |
| Anel | Anelida and Arcite | CA | Confessio Amantis |
| BD | Book of the Duchess | CB | Cinkante Ballades |
| Bo | Boece | | |
| CT | Canterbury Tales | Lydgate [Lyd] | |
| CYT | Canon's Yeoman's Tale | TB | Troy Book |
| FkI'T | Franklin's Tale | BlkKn | Complaint of the Black Knight |
| FriT | Friar's Tale | TG | Temple of Glas |
| GP | General Prologue to CT | ST | Siege of Thebes |
| HF | House of Fame | Pilg | Pilgrimage of the Life of Man |
| KnT | Knight's Tale | R&S | Reson & Sensualyte |
| LGW | Legend of Good Women | F&L | The Floure and the Leafe |
| Mars | Complaint of Mars | AL | The Assembly of Ladies |
| MchT | Merchant's Tale | KQ | Kingis Quair |
| MilT | Miller's Tale | | |
| NPT | Nun's Priest's Tale | Machaut: | |
| PardT | Pardoner's Tale | FA | La Fonteinne Amoureuse |
| ParsT | Parson's Tale | Remede | Remede de Fortune |
| PF | Parliament of Fowls | VD | Voir-Dit |
| | | LBD | La Belle Dame Sans Mercy |
| | | RR | Roman de la rose |

References to Steele and Day (S&D) are to their "Notes" (to the lines under discussion) unless otherwise specified.

Citations from the OED and other reference works in the notes direct the reader to supplementary information (likewise, I have included a few references to Alford's *Glossary of Legal Diction* to emphasize Charles's often technical use of words); for definitions, however, see the glossary.

The relevant words or lines in the French counterpart of an English poem (quoted from Champion, *Poésies*) are usually placed at the end of the note, preceded by *Fr.* Quotations are limited to words or phrases relevant for comparison; no attempt has been made to quote syntactically complete passages.

1–55 The patent is composed in sections: After the two-line identification of the authors of the document, they greet their followers and notify them of the decision to admit the young duke into their service and provide for him appropriately (3–16). They therefore command their followers to aid and support him in all ways (17–31), since he has vowed to serve Cupid above all and to take whatever pains necessary (32–36) and has left his heart as a pledge of his loyalty (37–39)—for which the god and goddess are beholden to him (40–41)—which will make him a good example to all aspiring lovers (32–46), wherefore he will be rewarded (47–48). The rulers confirm the agreement (49–52), and the document is dated (54–56). See Alford, s.v. *lettre, patente*.

3–8 Steele and Day quote the opening of an episcopal letter that parallels the Fr version and note the wordiness of the E version. The terminology used both here and during the process of the lover's withdrawal from Love's service is generally feudal and secular rather than religious. For parallels to the E, see Appendix V. For a list of the duke's legal and feudal terms, see Goodrich, *Themes*, 142 n. 16, and S&D, xxxviii–xxxix.

Fr: *Salus de cuer, par nostre grant humblesse,*

A tous amans.

Savoir faisons que le duc d'Orlians,

Nommé Charles, a present jeune d'ans,

Nous retenons pour l'un de noz servans

Par ces presentez.

10 *pencioun*: see Alford, s.v. *pensioun*.

12 S&D suggest that *he* is probably a scribal error for *we* on the basis of the Fr – (“tant que vouldrons”), but either reading is possible in the context.

14 *dislust*: apparently a coinage, it is simply the opposite of *lust*.

15–16 If S&D's paraphrase is correct (“we trust thus to your attention” rather than, say, “we trust [that] this [is] as you wish”), both *entent* and *trust* are used in senses not found elsewhere in these poems. This passage diverges from the Fr. S&D note the pair *devanciers* (Fr)/*avaunce* (E).

18 *parlement*: see Alford, s.v. *parlement*.

24 The line has an extra (fifth) syllable. (Fr: “En corps et biens”). The (heterometric) verse form of the letter, with periodic short lines, is not unusual in Fr poetry.

33 Note that Venus seems to be forgotten in 33 (Fr: “De nous servir”).

37–39 *refuse*: in the sense *ne pas consentir* or *éviter* (Greimas, s.v. *refuser*).

41 On the use of *thousand* (as well as *score*, 4571) as an indefinite number, see Mustanoja, 307–8.

42–45 *myssold*: MED gives “?to sell badly.”

good will: cf. OED, s.v. *goodwill* 3b quot. Maundev. xxi.96: *Fischez þat hase all þe see at will to swymme in schall with þaire awen gude will come þider.*

45–48 *abone*: the word *bon* seems to have been used primarily in set phrases such as *bon hostel* (HF 1022).

Even in this presumably early and fairly literal version of a Fr poem,

it is interesting to analyze Charles's alternative strategies in constructing this pseudo-document in E. The short lines in this poem generally conclude the thought of the previous four lines (32, 40, and 48 are the exceptions in both versions). In 44, however, the Fr version begins a new clause:

Mais pour moustrer
A toutes gens bon exemple d'amer,
Nous le voulons richement guerdonner,
Et de noz biens a largesse donner,

whereas in the E version the line rounds out the previous one, even though the poet has not rendered the line which precedes it ("Ne ses travaux pour neant despendus"). He uses the space thus created simply to introduce strong condemnations of possible infidelity ("Crist forbede that he shuld! Hit were fowl doone!"). This results in less space in which to express the following clause (45-47). As a result, he omits the line beginning "Et de noz biens." Some of this reorganization may well have to do with the exigencies of rhyme.

49 *as*: see Mustanoja (334) on *as* in exhortations and asseverations. Chaucer commonly uses *as* in imperative constructions such as this one (e.g., *MilT* 3777, *T&C* 5.145). Charles's usage suggests that he may have sensed that *as* could be used as an emphatic or pointer in many kinds of constructions.

50 *feodaries* or *counsele*: see Alford, s.v. *counseil*.

Fr: "Gens de conseil et serviteurs loyaulx."

53 An alexandrine to indicate that the body of this letter patent is complete. *Gyve*: translation of the Latin formula (e.g., *Data Londonie*, "given at London") followed by place and date (see OED, s.v. *date sb2*). For a parallel issued by Charles himself, see Appendix V. On this document, see Camargo, 99-100. Christine de Pisan's *Dit de la rose* is likewise "escript le jour Saint Valentin" (line 639, Fenster and Erler, 122).

54-55 *As . . . As*: two instances of *as* used in constructions which have not survived, one a temporal expression and the other in the sense "having regard to the particular . . . circumstance mentioned" (Mustanoja, 332-33). The remaining five lines of this folio are left blank.

The Fr version closes:

Donné le jour saint Valentin martir,
En la cité de Gracieux Desir,
Ou avons fait nostre conseil tenir.
Par Cupido et Venus souverains,
A ce presens plusieurs Plaisirs Mondains. (53-57)

56-111 This first long speech of the narrator is divided into two parts: in the first he thanks (67) the God of Love (56-90); in the second he requests (91) a heart to replace the one he has given to Love (91-111). S&D's statement, at the beginning of their notes, that this section of narrative verse constitutes a "new introduction" to the work that Charles may have written to replace the (now lost) opening allegory has little to recommend it (see Introduction, "Argument of the Poem," and "The Manuscripts").

- 70 Though S&D print *If*, the guide letter is clearly an *O*. If the MS is correct, "of" must mean "because," and "for which that" (72), "in exchange for [your generosity]" or "for that reason." If the scribe miscopied "if," "for which that" means "for that reason."
- 71 worthy: the scribe has omitted *-y* (*-i*) or *-e* (it rhymes with *trewly/verily*; cf. 1524).
- 77 The new stanza should have echoed the last word of the previous line ("I sterve"), for the poet goes on to explain that, much as he would like to, he cannot die. There is always the possibility that the scribe simply picked up the wrong rhyme word (from 75). It is not unusual for the poet to omit a syllable (usually unstressed) after a question or exclamation (cf. 5876–80), but it is difficult to say what the meter of the intended line would have been.
suarith: MED, following S&D, glosses "digress" (of speech), but he is not digressing; he is misspeaking.
- 79 suffisith: cf. *KQ*, st. 140.
- 80 The God of Love "revid" the lover of death in the opening allegory of the missing first quire. There the God of Love promised that *Espoir*, his physician, would keep the lover from dying until he had obtained a heart for himself (Fr 395–400).
- 90 worldis wide: the more usual expression is *worldis longe*.
- 91–94 as this: in this case, *as* is used with *this* as a vaguely emphatic or deictic particle (see MED, s.v. also 3b [b]). For other examples, see Glossary, s.v. *this adv*. This should not be confused with the pronomial construction in, e.g., 47 or 102. The rhetoric of these lines is excessively, but legalistically, humble: "y biseche you licence . . . forto graunt . . . to sewe . . . to purchase. . . ."
On the subject of hearts in this context, see Leyerle.
- 101 hoker moker: See MED, s.v. *mokeren*, "to heap up (money), hoard" from *moker*, "worldly wealth, possessions" (see also *mukken v*: a. to spread manure; b. to get rich) and *T&C* 3.1375; *Bo* 2pr.5.17.
- 107–9 "Since *they* has probably been substituted in error for 'she' in 106, it is possible that there has been a similar (uncorrected) mistake here, and that the line should run, 'Hit not preuayleth though y', my sufferings are of no avail. For the metre, cf. 'felith,' 2669" (S&D). The two errors (106 and 109) suggest that the poet was thinking of the lover's rivals at this point. Cf. *LBD* 515–16, where Love has "many hertes gotten by conquest."
- 113 hyt: the dictionaries do not support S&D's gloss, "attack."
- 120 As forto kepe: Mustanoja (334) comments on the ME use of *as* before infinitives, perhaps under Fr influence.
- 126–27 Charles seems here to employ one of his favorite devices: he makes the God of Love revise his rhetoric as he speaks. (S&D translate *purchase* "contrive," but the intrusive phrase "now let see" performs no function if the grammar is seamless.) The God of Love's tone here is one of impatience; he is tired of dealing with this unruly, childish beginner and speaks like an irritated parent.

- 132 The MS appears to read *resfayue*, but the bar of the *f* begins higher than usual and slants downward toward the *a* (perhaps simply a false start); MED gives *ressaife* as a possible spelling.
- 137 In the opening (Fr) allegory *Beauté* commands the narrator to be a “diligent escolier” and learn the skills appropriate to a lover (see Introduction, “Argument of the Poem”). The “schools of love” were known to many of Charles’s contemporaries; see, e.g., *Epistle of Othea*: “And þan spak Venus . . . and seide: I am sche þat kepith scolis of loue . . .” (Bühler, 90, glose 73) and Machaut, *FA*, 1406.
- 140–53 Cf. *MilT* 3380–82; for critical commentary, see Ross, *Miller’s Tale*, 174–75: “The expanded marginal gloss in the Chaucer MS, B.L. Egerton 2864, runs: ‘Vnde Ouidius Ictibus agrestem ciuilem munere vince Colloqui nobilem comoditate loci [Whence Ovid: Win the rustic with strokes, the city-dweller with gifts, and the noble of high rank with discourse—Hoffman trans.],’ but this passage is not to be found in Ovid.”
- 144 *paysen in balaunce*: cf. *CA* 8.2380–81: “[Venus] leith no peis in the balance, / Bot as hir lyketh forto weie.” The association of the balance with love is traditional in this kind of poetry; for an example from the twelfth-century troubadour Folquet de Marseille and a thirteenth-century illustration of it, see Huot, “Visualization,” 9. Ultimately, of course, the image derives from the Last Judgment.
- 145–46 Such *curteys speche*, or *luf-talkyng*, is both the evidence of and the prerequisite for the courtly lover (see Benson, “Courtly Love”).
- 147 The God of Love begins with the term *marchaunt* to define the middle way (class), but thinks immediately of a more restricted term which will make the point stronger: *burgeys*. Women of the merchant class would have to be won with gifts; daughters of burgesses would have to be won with even greater gifts (see Alford, s.v. *burgeis*).
- 150–51 On the use of *what* as an interjection, see Mustanoja, 184. not *tippe* nor *tapp*: cited in OED, s.v. *tip* sb2.
- 152 *loke who that*; for this construction, cf. *WBT* 1113, *FkIT* 771.
- 153 *rewdisshe child*: repeats *cherlis doughtir*, probably because of the intrusive clause of 151–52. On the summary treatment of peasant women in such circumstances, see Andreas Capellanus 1.11 (222–23). The blunt anti-feminism of these lines is anomalous in this work.
- 161–74 These stanzas are reminiscent of Chaucer’s *Pity*.
- 164 *wer*: OED lists no form without *-s*. According to Daunt, it is a Northern word (ON *verri*, 151).
- 170–72 We take for granted that the removal of the heart is a purely metaphorical procedure, but it is clear from late medieval descriptions and depictions that it was seen as a truly anatomical and extremely painful operation. The common depictions of the offer of a heart dripping with blood are one evidence of this; the detail that the heart must “grow” back into the body of the lover is another.
- 173–74 This repeats the situation sketched in 129–32.
- 177–78 The introduction of (only) the second of two parallel verbs with *to* (or

- forto*) is common in these poems.
- 182 more *ferre*: cf. 5308, 5427.
withouten or *without a* in 183 would improve the meter.
- 189–90 Cf. *LBD*: “Out of the prees I me withdrew . . .” (183).
- 191 The narrator is referring at once to the limits of his imagination, his skills as a poet, and his sophistication as a man.
- 193 Cf. 4641.
- 196 Perhaps a Lydgate line, or perhaps *to* should be *forto*.
- 197 The narrator presents each of the three lyric sequences as having a real function in his world. The ballade sequences are essentially love-letters, each sequence addressed to a different lady (he writes the double ballade on Fortune for someone else’s use). The roundel series is presented as a banquet for his readers/hearers/guests. This sort of highly self-conscious situating of a lyric or lyrics within a narrative had been common in Fr poetry since the time of Machaut and before. On the subject of intercalated lyrics in relation to pseudo-autobiographies, see Gybbon-Monypenny, as well as the work of Calin, *Poet at the Fountain*, Huot, *From Song to Book*, and Boulton.
- 203 Fourteen blank lines at the top of the first leaf of ballades may have been left for decoration.
- 204 Fr: Je vous suppli, vueilliez me pardonner.
- 207–8 Fr: Plus longuement je ne le puis celer
 Qu’il ne faille que sachiés ma destresse.
 Comme celle qui me peut conforter;
 Car je vous tiens pour ma seule maistresse.
- 209 That are it ye: a strange construction. We might say (in a literary mood) – “All my comfort, that is you.” Charles complicates the construction (if I have identified it correctly) by inserting the pronoun to stand for *comfort* and using the plural verb (?perhaps a Northernism) to agree with the subject, *ye*.
- 222–24 Fr: Mais s’il vous plaist que, de cy en avant,
 En vous servant, puisse ma vie user,
 Je vous supply que, sans me refuser,
 Vueilliez souffrir qu’y mette ma jeunesse. . . .
- 227 The awakening of the lady’s pity is the first order of business (cf. 174).
- 231 *pressen*: a form of *prisoun(en)* [rhymes: *sesoun/chesoun/resoun*]; cf. 2670. Fr: “emprisonner.” *Pressen* (“shut”) makes good sense but a bad rhyme.
- In the MS, the scribe has not left room for an initial two-line capital (and therefore the second letter is not capitalized) either here or in B 7 (381). As the first seven stanzas are also run together without spaces, this is perhaps a symptom of the scribe’s not yet having hit his stride. He also seems to experiment in this ballade with a caesural virgule, e.g., in lines 240–45, which he then abandons.
- 234–35 *vpright*: *sle vpright* is apparently an unusual collocation (*usu. lie vpright*, i.e., at full length, supine). “Which” refers to the lady’s glance.
- 249 *fawkoun*: the scribe was apparently confused by the text he received, perhaps because of an unusual spelling. It is probable that the poet

intended *body and facioun*, “figure and face.”

- 255 *werieth*: some of the entries under *war* in the glossary may be reflexes of “weary” rather than “war” *v*; in a number of these contexts “to harrass” and “to exhaust” make equally good sense, and in fact Charles may at times be playing on the two meanings.
- 259–93 Rhymes in *-yng*, of which the poet is fond, generally cause him to alter his usual syntax; note the number of gerunds in rhyme position in this lyric. The practice of stressing this ending is common in ME.
- 261–62 Cf. *PF* 140.
- 262 *wrong or right* would make a decasyllabic line and a parallel phrase to the one following, but the scribe inserts a virgule here, indicating that he recognized that the poet had omitted *of* (or perhaps Charles provided the virgule, though this is unlikely in view of his practice in his autograph manuscript).
- 263 Plesauce: Poirion says of Charles’s use of the word in his Fr poetry, “Charles d’Orléans, par l’emploi allégorique, semble avoir fait un sort privilégié à ce nom parfois synonyme de ‘volupté’” (*Le Lexique*, s.v. *plaisance*).
- 267 Another hand has added a *d* to *straunge* in the penultimate line of each of the first three stanzas of this poem. In addition, in this line *y* is written over the final *e* and a hairstroke is inserted between the *d* and the following word.
- 269–86 *Whiche eyen*: he implies that the eyes have already been introduced in the first stanza, whereas he has only referred to “sight” and “biholdyng” (but in the Fr version “yeulx”), unless, perhaps, we are to understand something like “from which sight.”
- This stanza provides a good example of the poet’s linear syntactic structures, especially evident in the earlier poems: “. . . which gyvith . . . which doth [causes] . . . which byndith . . . which causith . . . which slepith . . . which greef is . . .” —a string of effects, from the initial glance of the lady to his lifetime bondage. Lines 273–74 are not close to the Fr. He here introduces the return look (sending them to spy) which completes the enslavement begun by the lady’s glances.
- The eyes and the heart play an important role in the work; see, e.g., *Ballades* 4, 6, 71, 82, 106, 115, and *Roundels* 22, 68, 91.
- 281 Cf. 5940. Both may recall the opening lines of *PF*.
- 291 *as*: this use of *as* preceding a prepositional phrase is common in Charles’s E poems (see Mustanoja, 332–33). (His frequent use of *as* is nicely demonstrated in this envoy, where he employs it four times in three different constructions.) In many cases it is not necessary to translate it. *Iuysse*: see Alford, s.v. *jewishe*.
- 311 *pight*: MED cites this line, giving: 4a “to throw, hurl, cast” (with *upon*). This cannot be correct; it must be *pight vnto*, “thrust” (with *in* or *into*).
- 315–18 The envoy does not follow the usual rule of repeating the rhyme scheme of the concluding lines of the previous stanza; another exception is B 11.

- 321 out: MED cites this line, giving "allas!, woe is me!" It is probably a scribal error for *wot* (Fr "Dieu scet"). Cf. 5067.
- 322 but what: Charles uses this phrase frequently. MED does not record it under *but*. Charles's uses of the phrase do not fit well into the OED's definition ("what A.I.5b [a Gallicism = mais quoi?] but, after all") [first instance 1586]. The two-word phrase is most often used as an exclamation, just as he uses *What!* alone (see 150). It is sometimes difficult (as in line 571) to distinguish between the one- and two-word exclamations. See Hammond, *English Verse*, 402, line 38; cf. *CA Prol.* 487; 2.2216.
- 327 "Which" refers back rather loosely to the temptation of the lady's glances and words.
- 333 S&D note the characteristic quality of this line in Charles's verse and cite *T&C* 3.131, 133, and 923.
- 339 square: MED glosses "deviate" (from normal behavior).
- 340-43 Line 342 seems to shift the syntax from the accusation of 340-41 to that of a request. This either/or proposition echoes the first stanza and is repeated again in the envoy. The construction is more complex (to fill out the decasyllabic lines) than the Fr, which simply says "Plaise vous en paix le laissier, / Ou lui accordez son desir."
- 344 It is striking that the thought of the corresponding line in the Fr version ("D'un loyal cueur ainsi meurdrir") finds no place in the E version. Charles saves such a charge (*morderesse*) for the second lady, who is much less kind (B 91).
- 353 thought: on the variety of uses of *pensée* in the Fr poems, see Poirion, *Le Lexique*, s.v. *pensee*, *pensement*, *penser*.
- 354 sett there a nayle: Whiting & Whiting cite this exclamation uniquely. Tilley quotes a related phrase (s.v. *straw*) from Heywood: "here will I stoppe, and laie a strawe (*Prov* ii, ch. 4 s G4)"; cf. Cotgrave: "mettre la paille au devant de. *To interrupt; to hinder, stop, or stay the speech of*" (s.v. *Paille*).
- 371 cast me lo a kayle: S&D's gloss ("throw me down a skittle") is not helpful. Burrow suggests "knock down one of my skittles," which he interprets as "that's right, abuse me!" (*English Verse*, 291), probably based on the MED suggestion "hurl abuse at, reprove." It is difficult to see what "abuse" the lover is referring to, however. The only other instance of the expression cited by MED (Utley, "Lament," cited as *Vncomly in*) is not altogether clear and should not, I should think, be used as a gloss without careful attention to tone and context (cf. "Lament," l. 35).

The lover may rather be inviting a turn in the argument (see Halliwell-Phillips, Joseph Wright, s.v. *cale*, and Brockett, s.v. *kail*). Purcell suggests "go on then, just try; have a go and see how close you get to the mark" (26-27). A related possibility is that *kayle* may come from Fr *caille*; *cailles* are "round beads, wherewith Frenchmen play at *Trou-madame*; and whereof the *Trou-madame* is tearmed *Passe-caille*" (Cotgrave, s.v. *Trou Madame*; English "Trunks," for which see OED, s.v. *trunk* 16). In this case, the meaning would again be "take a turn" or "see how well you do!"

Whatever the precise meaning of the phrase (whether the reference is to a "bowling pin," a playing piece, or simply a turn), the lover is provoked by the heart's obstinance and attempts to provoke the heart in turn. MED takes "O pese!" and the following line as part of this same speech, as does Burrow, but it belongs rather to the heart, who attempts to cool the rising heat of the argument with, "O pese! [Fr: "Taisiez vous"] . . . y lust not rayle!" (a word which S&D mistakenly take as "jest") and "leve this aray!" (these expressions do not appear in the Fr). The colloquial quality of this exchange has been prepared for by 354.

379 such a way, i.e., ?graciously.

381 See 231n.

393 S&D print *of* for *or*, and MED cites the line, s.v. *of*, in error, but see 2661, 4360, 5868.

396 *quantite*: the MED gloss ("if there is sufficient time") cannot be correct. The lover is talking about the desirability of instantaneous restraint.

404 *plesaunce*: see 4764n.

412 The first seven ballades are run together without spacing; at this point the scribe begins to leave two blank lines between ballades and one between stanzas.

415 the Romance of Plesaunt Pancer: presumably an imaginary romance (misread by some early commentators as the Romance of Plesaunt Chaucer).

420 *bound*: a line filler. We might translate "written and fixed [i.e., set down permanently]," but it is perhaps just as likely that the poet's attention shifted from the deeds of the lady to the mechanics of book production.

428–31 Here the conflict of the lover with both eyes and heart is introduced for the first time. The (unusual) use of "my" gives away the game that the desire is not only that of the eyes, in spite of the lover's protestations to the contrary.

confounde: the reflexive pronoun is omitted.

440–90 This is one of the few *saluts d'amour* in the work; the narrator more often complains than celebrates his lady. The poet's use of the chant royal form here may serve to sum up the first section of ballades, which has been devoted to the effects of the lady's eyes and the narrator's problems with his heart. Perhaps these first nine lyrics were originally intended as an ensemble that was only later incorporated into a longer work. In the following five ballades, the lady and lover are separated.

442 *wittynes*: earliest OED citation is Heywood (1533).

458 *Bounte*, *Honour*, *Astat*, and *Gentiles*: this is one of the very few poems in which the narrator seems to praise the lady for inner graces, but even in this poem he dwells at length on her outward beauty and bearing.

471 Although phoenix references are not uncommon, Charles does not use one in his Fr poems. S&D cite *BD* 980–82, comparing 460 with *BD* 998–1006 and 461–64 with *BD* 907–12.

474 *suffisyngly*: Charles attaches an adverbial ending to the adjective to create a rhyme. Fr: "suffisant."

476-79 Fr: S'il est aucun qui soit prins de tristesse

Voise veoir son doulx maintenantement,

Je me fais fort que le mal qui le blesse

Le laissera pour lors soudainement. . . .

482 *anoy*: pronounced [-wi] here and elsewhere.

491 In *Ballades* 10 to 15 the lady is apparently absent. S&D provide a note at this point outlining the "plot" of the early stages of the first ballade sequence, including the separation of the lovers and their need for secrecy, which according to their interpretation "negatives any possibility of these poems being addressed to [Charles's] wife." Though it is entirely possible that some of the ballades of the first sequence do concern Isabelle or Bonne, some may have been written on various occasions for different purposes and only later assembled into this work.

494 MED lists a number of proverbs using "shirt," but none which emphasize the closeness of the shirt to the body (cf. *KnT* 1566, *LGW* 2629). OED records a proverb similar to Charles's (s.v. *shirt*, 2e): "near is my shirt but nearer is my skin" (see 1596 Lodge, 1625 Godwin). Whiting & Whiting cite Charles alone; Tilley records the same proverbs as does the OED (S356). Bohn records the Fr proverb: "la peau est plus proche que la chemise" (30), and S&D record a similar proverb from Godefroy. None of the various shirt images in this work exist in the Fr.

Fr: Qu'Amour me fait chascun jour endurer.

500 *forpeyne*: the scribe has perhaps taken this as "torture," but the following line (and the rhyme) suggests that the word is *forpyn* (from *pynden* with intensive *for-*, OED, s.v. *pin* v¹ II.11). The basic meaning is to impound, but here it is "restrain, confine," i.e., force (myself) (cf. the sense of 4333-35 and Daunt, 142, where she cites a parallel from Lydgate). Charles may, of course, have had the reflex of "(for)pain" in mind (cf. 402).

508 *hathe pesid*: MED, following S&D, glosses *lith pesid*, "is alleviated" (the reading I have adopted), citing this line as the only witness. It records no use of *hathe* with *pesid*.

513 S&D gloss *mys*, "to lack" (with "French stress," according to Daunt). Cf. *PF* 40.

Fr: Vous suppliant que ne vueilliez changier

Car en vous sont tous mes plaisirs mondains,

Desquelz me fault a present deporter

Puis qu'ainsi est que de vous suy loingtains.

516 In this and the following ballade it is difficult to decide when nouns (comfort, absence, etc.) constitute personifications. They operate as metaphors so fleetingly that the reader should feel free to read them as common nouns.

519 "fer" echoes "fare" in the last line of the previous ballade and anticipates the same word in the opening of the following poem (558).

528 *displeasance*: MED gives meanings such as "displeasure, dissatisfaction, discontent, cause for resentment, annoyance." Charles seems to use the word (as well as the related *displesere*) with a much stronger denotation—

- something like "misery, unhappiness, grief." Cf. Poirion, *Le Lexique*, s.v. *desplaisance, desplaisir*.
- 537-38 S&D say that the refrain is "left unconnected with the stanza," because it can "hardly be the object of *atayne*." Perhaps "As moche" refers back to "an vnhappy day"; then "may they attain as unhappy a day—so much of weal—as I have grief" (or, in other words, may they be as unhappy as I am).
- 543 The lover delays his return for some pressing reason known to the lady but not to the reader (540).
- 545-46 Charles uses *fayne* three times in this stanza and once in the envoy (the Fr differs significantly); its use in 551 suggests that it must here mean "refrain" rather than "feign." His use of the finite "[I] shall" with the infinitive "to serve" may be related to his construction, e.g., in 2708 (see note).
- 546 in substance: Charles uses this phrase repeatedly, but it is difficult to assign precise meanings to its various occurrences. It may be translated many ways: in reality, in general, in essentials, etc. S&D suggest that it is used as an expletive, and gloss "substantially."
- 551 A lack, i.e., of tears.
- 558 mollyng: "tender"; Poirion glosses *amolir*, which Charles uses in B LXXX, "rendre plus tendre (en parlant d'un fruit)" (*Le Lexique*, s.v. *amolir*).
- 561-65 For the symptoms of lovesickness and its relation to melancholy, see Wack, 56, 62-70, 100-101.
- 566 happy: rhymes *aduersite* (cf. 1618 and Introduction, "Versification").
- 569 manar: the spelling is made to match the rhymes. Charles's usual spelling is *manere*.
- 574 daungerous Crewelte: Fr: "Dangier, le crueux."
- 594 The poet's use of *with* for *by* is not so rare as S&D imply (see OED, s.v. *with*, 37b and 40a).
 plegge: cf. Alford, s.v. *pledge*.
- 606 longe agoon: the MED does not give the definition "for a long time." Cf. Chaucer *Pity* 1: "Pite, that I have sought so yore agoo [for so long]," which MED glosses "long ago."
- 615 The scribe started to write *lady &*, probably because collocations such as *lady and mastres* are so common, and crossed out the half-finished *&*. *Lady mastres* is uncommon; the line must be headless.
- 627 turnys: Poirion glosses the Fr word *manoeuvres, ruses* and quotes Chartier, *Ballade IV*: "esbahy de ses estranges tours" (*Le Lexique*, s.v. *tour*).
- 629 but Pite slepith fast: this phrase is not found in the Fr version, additional reason to think it was borrowed from Chaucer's poem.
- 638-39 The E version contains an element of time ("yet . . . now") that is lacking in the Fr version, an addition which seems only to obscure the sense. The E version seems to state rather elliptically that in the past the lover could trust only in Hope, but now he also has the lady, whom in fact he trusts most of all. The Fr version contains no parallel to the image in 640, either; the two envoys differ entirely.

Fr: car mon recours
 J'ay en Espoir, en qui me fie,
 Et en vous, Belle, seulement.

640 Cf. *Anel* 313–14.

642 The Fr and E run parallel, but the envoys differ radically. The line may be corrupt and the paraphrase is therefore tentative.

644 lord: unlikely to be direct address, since the narrator never refers to the lady as his *lord*. I have taken “That” as referring to the speaker and “knowist” as “acknowledge” or “recognize.”

654–56 The syntax is unclear (the Fr version is much simpler).

Fr: Combien que je ne dye mie
 Que n'aye receu bien et joye,
 En vostre douce compaignie.

667 cum of: cf. *PF* 494, *MilT* 3728, and Ross, *Miller's Tale* 3728n, 227.

668 wound: the poet is straining for a rhyme.

Fr: Car trop avez refus nourry
 En vous. . . .

673 In yow: the phrase has no real function in this instance.

683 content: OED lists no usage that is intransitive but not reflexive.

Fr: Qui peust contenter mon desir.

687 serue of: from Fr (*servir de*), the phrase is found in *MancT* 339 (Prins, 255; cf. 2033).

690 S&D suggest that the verb is understood (as it is in the Fr). It is also possible that the scribe has written *as* for *is*.

Fr: Non pas peu, car de bon vouloir.

699 aturbance: OED gives only *turbation* “perturbation, agitation of mind.” In line 1903 it translates Fr *doleur*. The parentheses around 701 allow the previous line to link up with the refrain; otherwise it is difficult to see how that refrain functions grammatically.

Fr: Belle, je vous vueil requerir:
 Pensés, quant serés de loisir,
 Qu'en grant mal, qui trop me guerroye,
 Est tourné, sans vous en mentir,
 Ce peu de plaisir que j'avoye!

706 Fr: Et que l'en doit laissier Ennuy,
 Pour prendre joyeuse Plaisance.

708 Fr: Loingtain de Joye conquerer.

715 caytjif: Fr: *dolent*.

725 hir: probably an error for *his*, if we expect consistency in these poems (cf. 780), though Disdayne is apparently female (728). Both abstractions, of course, are aspects of the lady.

727 stille: the scribe has matched the spelling with 731 (note the two meanings), but see 5059.

734 displetere: Like the word *displeasaunce*, Charles seems to use *displetere* to mean something like “misery,” i.e., as a much stronger negative than do other writers of the period (but see OED, s.v. displeasure 2).

- 737–39 Fr: Ja ne sera en tout vostre pouoir
De me changier le tresloyal vouloir
Qu'ay eu tousjours de la belle servir. . . .
- 743 This is the proper response of a lover to discouragement. This attitude contrasts starkly with the petulance of the second ballade sequence.
- 747 Fr: J'ay tout les maulx que nul pourroit souffrir.
- 756–57 The line has been revised, but in the E the referent is still unclear and the verb forms seem incorrect; in the Fr the speaker addresses the personifications, who will be vexed: “Bien aurez dueil, se me voyez avoir / Le plus grant bien qui me puist avenir.” I have therefore emended *haue y* to *will they*.
- 768 swelty: cf. *T&C* 3.347, *KnT* 1356.
- 769 As: ?For
The debate between the virtues of speaking and writing was commonplace. He alludes to this struggle in 3740–42 and again in 5343–48.
- 770 goodlyhed: Charles nearly always uses this word to refer to external beauty rather than to any inner beauty or virtue (see 5270–71).
- 779 Daunger is substituted for the lady in this stanza, but in (the original) line 781 (“For when y payne then she for laughtir grent”) either the poet had not noticed the inconsistency or he was creating a very weak personification (a technique more common in the second ballade sequence). It is difficult to see why Daunger is introduced in this ballade (in both versions), since the lady has graciously requested of the lover that he send her a ballade and absence seems to be the primary cause of his grief. For a variety of definitions of Daunger in various contexts, see Poirion, *Le Lexique*, s.v. dangier.
- 780 Apparently the poet decided to change the line to: “In euery deed so frowarde and contrayre” (cf. Lyd *ST* 3178 and *Rom* 5411: “froward Fortune and contraire” [“perverse et contraire,” Poirion, *Rose*, line 4845]; Revisor B apparently copied *contrary* in error for *contrayre*). At any rate, someone (perhaps Charles) decided to cancel the correction.
Fr: En tous mes fais je le treuve contraire.
- 788 Likewise in 5346 the lover is afraid that the (new) lady might forget him.
- 789 The remaining fifteen lines on 15v are left blank, for which the text provides no clear reason.
- 792 Daunt suggests that *wete* reflects a Northern pronunciation (149). See also 3699, 3839, 6370.
- 793 faithfulle: the extra syllable improves both meter and sense.
- 795 blynke: literally, a flash, an extremely brief gleam of light.
- 799 A later hand has erased *lo* or *loo* and replaced it with *noo* in each of the refrain lines. As the alteration does not improve the sense, I have not recorded it in the text. It is an odd position for *lo*, and this is perhaps what bothered the reader who altered it.
- 810 Daunt glosses *bandoun*, “despair” (141); S&D make it into a passive. In fact it parallels the Fr:
Quant Pitié vit que franchement
Voulu mon cuer abandonner

Envers ma dame. . . .

Mercy does not appear in the Fr; it is Pity who negotiates with the lady (*traitta*).

814 charging: see Alford, s.v. *chargen* II.

815 where y wake or wynke: cf. *HF* 482. He expands the expression in 5678 and 5762.

816–17 though tornys sesse or synke: it is at least clear that Daunger does the lover bad turns whenever he can, but I can make no real sense of the last three words in the line. The poet was apparently reaching for rhymes in this stanza.

Fr: Maugré Dangier, qui recevoir
M'a fait chascun jour de telz tours.

821 assayde: perhaps with overtones of tasting, echoing line 808.

824 *as* is frequently used with the imperative to express a wish in ME (Hammond, *English Verse*, 470 n. 1).

826 The writing of love poems as a way of soothing the pain love inflicts is an old idea. The narrator of *La Vraie Medecine d'amours* calls the ink with which he writes his love poems "ointment" because it relieves love's pains (Huot, *From Song to Book*, 149–50).

852 It is possible that *forget is* is an error for *forgets* and that what he forgets (his pain) has been omitted.

Fr: Il oublie l'ennuy qu'il sent.

868 The poem contains allusions to a game, probably of chess, such as find fuller expression in B 61.

875 *my*: MS *me* is perhaps a reflexive dative (Mustanoja, 100), but as *rekeuyr* has no recorded reflexive form with object, it is more likely an error for *my*.

882 ordenaunce: the word may in fact have three meanings: (1) make preparations (for war or anything), (2) put troops in battle order, (3) chess term used with previous meaning. Charles may have had all three in mind, though of course the third carries out his chess imagery.

883 *fyaunce*: see 1122n. It might most smoothly be translated "hope."

885 *manaunce* [erased]: "a Northern and Scottish form . . . Charles may have picked it up and later found that it was not 'polite' Southern" (Daunt, 151) and so revised the line. S&D suggest that the word that was trimmed off might have been *Ageyne*. *Which han* might make better sense of the revised line. Elsewhere the scribe erases only as much as needs to be replaced (e.g., 1503, 5007).

Fr: De ce faulx Dangier qui m'avance.

888 The addition of final *s* to the rhyme words (see textual note) may have been merely a very successful attempt to imitate the letter, or possibly they were added by a putative French reader who did not see an *s* at the ends of these words.

891 *as loos now gevith prise*: a version of the phrase *los and pris*: "fame and renown" (cf. Ballade IX, 8: *pris et los* "renoun and praise"): As Fame now announces (sends abroad) your reputation.

- 895 This line illustrates the authority of Revisor B. The original line is apparently fairly close to the Fr: "Car Dangier l'a desrobé de Plaisir." Perhaps the poet was dissatisfied with the difficult word *?onycrepe*, which "ought" to mean "deprived [him] of." (MED, following S&D's reading *ouyrcepe*, derives *cepe* from *?chep*, and glosses "at too small a price, too cheaply?" citing this line uniquely.) In any case, Charles replaced the line with a completely different one, written in the MS by Revisor B. That the new line presents its own difficulties is another matter.
- 904 Or: "but what for? krost off peyes!" Daunt suggests Revisor A may have thought the word *peyes* [peis] capable of the same sound alternation as *dyl/dey* (143).
- 907 S&D gloss, "let not our simplicity be counted against us."
- 911 Though the poem is addressed to Hope at the outset, the envoy is addressed to the lady.
- 912 entryse: S&D suggest this word may be an error for *encryse*, "increase" (glossary) or *interesse*, "share, part" (notes). It is probably a form of *entresse* (see 1928), "entry, entrance" *n*, or "entering" *ger*, i.e., residence, presence.
- 916 paradise: echoes the word from 914, as does *Daungere* in 923 (cf. 895).
- 919 The scribe may have read "grevous sorrow" rather than "great griefs." The latter is preferable because of the plural pronoun in the following line.
Fr: Car il a de maux doloieux.
- 920 bras: the poet's way of intensifying his large, abstract number by doubling it.
- 937 sufferant: the context and the corresponding word in Ballade XXIV ("soufretieux") indicate that the word means "(one) who suffers" rather than "(one) who is patient," i.e., who is willing to suffer.
- 944 displaye thi baner: that is, announce the onset of battle (for more information, see Keen, 101-18). The opening parallels that of B 23 (887).
- 946 Cf. *LBD* 175-76: "A garnison she was of al goodnesse / To make a frounter for a lovers hert."
- 947 on why: S&D are right in their guess that *on why* means something like "unjustly, wrongfully," on the basis of the fact that it is used to translate Fr *a tort* in three instances (947, 1051, 1553; though not in two others: 997 and 1705). The scribe apparently did not recognize the word as *on wry* "awry" (see 997). The OED first records the figurative sense in 1494, but MED gives "not straightforward" (of speech), citing Gower's *CA* 2.442.
Fr: Et assailiez la frontiere
Ou Deuil et Merencolie,
A tort et par felonnie.
- 954 seith: this spelling could be a form of either "say" or "seek" (see 5080). Opting for the former, I would suggest that "who seith a manere" might loosely be translated "what they call a 'manner' (or false show)" of happiness.
- 955 outshewe: it is possible that Charles meant to write *out shoue* (cf. 1156). *Laughtir dry* is laughter without feeling.
- 973 This fine ballade contains an interesting pairing of military and religious

- imagery. Cf. the fire imagery of Chartier's Rondeau 14: "Au feu! Au feu! Au feu, qui mon coeur art / Par un brandon tiré d'un doulx regart" (Fire! Fire! Fire!—which burns my heart with a torch lighted by a soft glance), which in turn echoes Machaut's "Hareu! hareu! le feu, le feu, le feu!" (Johnson, 107 and 294–95).
- 978 queynt: rhyme *sent*. The word is sometimes spelled *quent*.
- 979 Charles's conversion of "si vous pry, Dieu d'Amours, / Sauvez mon cuer" to "'O God of Loue,' y cry, 'Helpe now myn hert'" contains, in *pry/cry*, a kind of bilingual word play typical of this work (see Introduction, "Authorship").
- 987 It is difficult to imagine how one might "rend" a fire from someone, but cf. 2449.
- 997 hevene: a scribal error for *evene*, probably caused by the reference to "Paradice," "seynt," etc. in the previous lines (S&D), or perhaps simply by dittography, as the previous two words begin with *h*.
- al onewhi: not recognizing the phrase, the scribe wrote *alone whi* (see 947n).
- 1007 lyes: S&D point out that "the Northern plural is required by the rhyme."
- 1014 patise: Fr: "En desert ont mis son plaisir, / Et joye tenue en pastis" (Champion glosses: "pâturage de qualité inférieure"). S&D find *patise* ("tribute, treaty" OED, c. 1500) unsatisfactory because "joy is not [the lover's] on terms, it is a stranger to him altogether, see 1019," preferring Champion's image to the E one. MED perhaps bases their definition on that of Poirion's gloss on the corresponding Fr word (*Le Lexique*, s.v. *pastis*, where he uses S&D's discarded E gloss to sort out the Fr!); they gloss *in patise*, "according to the terms of a bargain or covenant" and cite this unique occurrence of the word (related to ModE "pact"). We are not told what the terms of the bargain are.
- 1016–17 The repetition of *maner* implies that, though it raises hopes in him, the promise of Comfort is worthless.
- 1031 tiise: "ties"; a clever inversion of the usual meaning of the verb ("to join") which nevertheless retains the sense of constraint or fixedness that the word connotes.
- 1034 A number of ballades contain the unmistakable rhetoric of epistolary prose in their closing lines, even when the poems are not structured formally as letters. Of the Fr "Poème de la prison" that corresponds to this part of the E work, Charles Kany says that it "is the first long poem made up of a large number of missives written by one person (not including the epistles in the framework)" (35).
- 1037–75 This ballade has clearly been revised (not entirely consistently) by both revisors. A fine, dark cross in the outer margin seems to mark the place for a correction. The first line has been replaced by another in the hand of Revisor B that fits the grammar of the first stanza better. The retention of *Hoffa howe* is the result of an editorial decision based on the loss of part of the revised line.
- Revisor A has corrected the third person references of the second

stanza to second person, to accord with the opening lines (though he missed one *his* in 1057). He has also replaced line 1060; though we cannot read the original, the revised version is close to the version Charles wrote in the Fr counterpart of this poem: "J'ay mis; mon cuer en est d'accort." It is possible to surmise from this that Revisor A is making authorized corrections. *Glad* may have been picked up from the original line (which is too long) and is probably crossed out of the marginal version of the line to correct the meter.

S&D find the Fr version superior to the E because it is the lady's place (not the lover's) to send comfort to the heart. If *recomfort* is taken as "encouragement," however, the problem largely disappears.

1038 *hath* is the (only) main verb in the stanza. Lines 1041-47 constitute a long sub-clause.

1044 There has been some critical ink spilled over the question of the wind direction here (in the Fr counterpart, the wind blows *from* France to England, "Un plaisant vent venant de France"). S&D discuss various differences between the two ballades (1037n). Douglas Kelly sees the E as a correction of the Fr (207).

1051 discomfort: often confused with *discomfit*, it is here used, along with other battle imagery, to indicate defeat rather than simply discouragement. on why: see 947n.

1052 S&D note that the revisor here and in 1057 and 1060 alters the third person (found in the Fr version) to direct address. Line 1057 is only partially revised, however.

1057 See 1036n.

affyaunce: though the meaning "trusted [one]," i.e., "friend," "reliable companion" (referring to the lover's heart), is unattested, it seems from the context to be what Charles thought it meant—or could mean (he uses *fyauunce* in the same way in line 883). The Fr parallels for all three passages use the more usual, abstract sense of the word (see 1122, 4591).

1065 The scribe has mistakenly written *yowre* for *oure* (the only MS spelling).

1068-69 *Hert* escaped correction to *thow*. "Bothe" governs "me," "thow" [*hert*], and "tresoure."

1076 The scribe has written *Now* for *Not* (or possibly *Nor*). Of his (company).

1081 place: cf. Alford, s.v. place.

full sewrely out of drede: a piling up of emphatics, common in Charles's E verse.

1085 as for: more commonly *for as*.

1093 hardinesse: the scribe has omitted the second syllable, the addition of which would improve the meter and accord with the Fr *hardiesse*.

1095 Apparently Charles was thinking of the component parts of the word "nevertheless."

Fr.: sans craindre riens.

1106 allyaunce: the word has possible connotations of sex and marriage or may simply refer to a bond of friendship. Poirion glosses the word in the Fr counterpart as *mariage* (*Le Lexique*, s.v. *aliance*).

- 1108 See 2778n.
- 1109 letter of trete: Poirion glosses the Fr equivalent (“lectre du traictié”) as “‘contrat’ (de mariage),” citing “le traictié du mariage” between the duke and Bonne d’Armagnac (*Le Lexique*, s.v. traictié), but the idea of marriage is not necessarily implied (cf. 1873n).
- 1111 accord: in the Fr version *Loyauté* “witnesses” the letter (“tesmoignera”).
- 1115 ordenaunce: the word can connote preparations for marriage.
- 1116 I mene: it is also possible to read this as one word, as S&D do (i.e., Gladsum Desire and Plesaunce “together”).
- 1118 in more surete: given the legalistic language in this ballade, the reader may be justified in seeing in the word *surete* the common meaning of a bond or pledge, even though the intrusion of *more* would seem to reduce its force to simply “in more certainty, more surely.” A careful study of these poems (especially those with legalistic or feudal imagery) often reveals a more or less systematic use of the formal connotations of many common words.
- 1122 affyaunce: see 1057n.
- 1123 to kepe þis dede [i.e., document] from rayne: not mentioned in Fr (see Alford, s.v. dede).
- 1127 flaterere: S&D suggest dittography; perhaps the scribe misunderstood the rhyme scheme (which would usually alternate rhymes in the final four lines of the stanza) and so “corrected” *flaterere* to *flaterere*.
- 1128 S&D suggest, “who that frawde-is, [be] it he or she.” The verb may be plural, however, and is the copulative.
- 1132 If “more sewrete” should be glossed the same as it is in 1118 (“more surete”), this is the only instance I have found in the work of repetition of a rhyme identical in both sound and meaning.
- 1150 I have punctuated the refrain lines differently in some cases, not always to indicate that the meaning changes, but to illustrate different ways in which they might be read.
- 1153 Blue as the color of constancy (e.g., in *T&C* 3.885 and *Wom Unc*) was a commonplace in Charles’s time.
- 1156 out . . . shoue: cf. MED, s.v. *outshouven* (also used of words). The lover does not really explain “whi y so rudely out my wordis shoue” or “what Loue vs causid swere.”
- 1165 This is the only instance in which the narrator says that he actually has the lady’s heart. B 30 through B 38 are all very positive about the lover’s relationship with the lady (they differ in this from any in the second ballade sequence except B 107 and perhaps B 98).
- 1168 kercher of plesaunce: (Fr: “cueuvrechief de Plaisance”) this is Charles’s first use of an image he makes much better use of in the second dream vision (see 4764n), but it does illustrate the use of a *kercher* to wrap things in. Richard Green suggests that the heart may in this case be a love token (“Hearts, Minds,” 147).
- 1179 quyth: see Alford, s.v. *quiten II*.
- 1182 how? in an holow tre?: not in the Fr.

- 1191 In O the scribe has written identifications of the speakers (*L'amant* and *Le cueur*), but the E scribe has not.
tidyng: the word may be used in either the singular or plural form, which may account for the switch in number from 1192 to 1193.
- 1195 Note that (as in the Fr) the fifth line of each stanza is a one-line (rather than a two-line) reply.
- 1209–10 An indication that taking ship and crossing the Channel in the fifteenth century was no woman's work.
- 1216 hardly: here and in 3278 the poet may have intended *hertily*, "warmly, fervently."
- 1226 ioyfull: MED describes the word as an adjective, but it seems to accompany no noun. It is much more likely to be an adverb. "The" (instead of "thee") has perhaps misled the editor.
- 1230 Fr: Bien devez prisier la journee
Que fustes sien premierement.
- 1236 out dissent: not recorded in this sense of "undoubtedly." The scribe, perhaps influenced by *ay* in the same line, wrote *at* for *out* (cf. 1241 for a similar construction).
- 1240 wrought to the[e]: this collocation, of which the poet is apparently fond, seems to be unusual (see 1727 and 2875, also 1452).
- 1241 departement: the poet has taken over the word from the corresponding line in the Fr version; Poirion glosses "départ, séparation" (*Le Lexique*, s.v. departement).
- 1245 The refrain is not attached to the end of the stanza very carefully. The sense would seem to be that the heart is urged to realize what a great gift the faithfulness and favorable disposition of the lady he has chosen toward him is, but the line would seem to require some word such as *with* to open it. "Spent" does not sit well in the line and may have been selected simply for its rhyme.
- 1251 Mirror imagery has, of course, a long tradition in medieval courtly literature, much of it springing from the Mirror of Narcissus found in the RR. Cf. *T&C* 1.365ff., in which Troilus makes "a mirour of his mynde" in which he sees "al holly" the figure of Criseyde. These mirrors may in turn owe something to the passage in 1 Cor. 13.
- 1256 Charles commonly uses double superlatives, just as he multiplies great numbers (see also 1319).
Europe: OED first cites in 1603; MED does not include the word.
- 1266 bayte: cf. *T&C* 1.193. This is another example of Charles's love of bilingual word play; the poet has maintained the general meaning of the Fr and created an aural pun on the word *esbat*:
Ne mon cueur n'a jamais santé,
Fors quant il y peut regarder
Des yeulx de Joyeuse Plaisance;
Il s'y esbat pour temps passer,
En attendant Bonne Esperance. (Ballade XXXV)
Cf. 1725n.
- 1279–80 The touch of irony here is surely intended to be evident and contrib-

- utes to the view of the self-deceived lover which receives so much broader treatment in the central narrative section.
- 1281–1308 This ballade is a point-by-point response to a letter received from the lady. Though it lacks marked epistolary formulas, the refrain certainly acts as the closing of the letter.
- 1285–88 In the Fr version of this ballade, these lines repeat word for word the opening stanza of Chanson LII (if indeed the borrowing is not in the other direction), a lyric which Champion refers to as a “lettre” and prints in italics as if it were not written by Charles (see my 3887–90n). The E ballade repeats the first and fourth lines of the E roundel (or vice versa) and echoes the third; only the fourth line (1288/3890) is identical in the two E poems (note that the rhyme schemes differ).
- 1292 Charles uses the same distribution of words and meanings in his Fr poems: *message* is used for both “message” and “messenger” (as well as *messagier* for the latter; see Poirion, *Le Lexique*, s.v. *message*, *messagier*).
- 1293 Cf. OED, s.v. near *adj* 5.
- 1297 eche othir: Cf. *T&C* 2.1166.
Als: *also* disrupts the cadence of the line and spoils the meter.
- 1299 nay, nay!: an outburst which seems to mean “do not say that (it causes me such pain to read of it)!” (cf. 1286, 1390).
- 1329 were: on this use of the subjunctive, see Mustanoja, 467–68.
- 1332 it: either anticipates “pleser, comfort, and gladness” in the following line or is perhaps an error for *yit*. Here and elsewhere *bothe* is used of more than two items.
- 1333 Octosyllabic.
- 1340 Nathan draws parallels between this poem and *Rom/RR* and relates the imagery to that of R 69. More importantly, he discusses this ballade in relation to Wyatt’s “They fle from me” (see 3915n). There are other individual ballades that echo certain roundels (or vice versa), suggesting that the first ballade sequence was being composed during the same time period the roundels were.
- 1356 knowith: apparently the scribe wrote *know to*, realized his omission, and went back and added a small superscript *t* and a hairstroke to separate it from the following word.
- 1361 *sum*, after *me* was perhaps picked up from 1358.
- 1364 bi: i.e., via. Sweet Thought is Love’s messenger.
- 1370 neythir: as *bothe* elsewhere, Charles uses the word as a plural as well as a dual.
- 1375 It is a commonplace that even though the lover will not see his lady, the letter he writes will. This cluster of ballades is particularly thick with epistolary references such as this.
- 1379 S&D, noting that Champion “says that this Ballade must apply to Bonne,” say of this ballade, “. . . it is Fortune, and not Danger, which separates the lovers. The same is true of Ballades 40–43, where also there is no allusion to the need for secrecy [sic] and fear of jealousy which marks the earlier ballades.”

- 1383 The line is too short; it may be defective, since "whose" is necessary for the sense (though it is difficult to know where in the line to place it).
- 1387 *souereyn*: a courtly inversion of the use of the word as a noun meaning "husband." Cf. *CA* 1.861-62: "The Prestes tho gon hom ayein, / And sche goth to hire sovereign."
- 1391 *han*: see 3807n.
- 1392 *whan*: it is also possible that this is an error for *than*: and often when I come to ask him for sight of you, then . . . (cf. 6196).
- 1400 *tan*: syncopation of intervocalic [k] is a clear Northernism (Daunt, 150).
- 1402 *hir*: here and in 1404 the scribe has written *him* for *hir* (the rhetoric sounds more appropriate to Daunger than to Fortune).
- Fr: Pensant d'avoir, au par aler,
Par Leauté, ou mon ressort
J'ay mis, de Plaisance l'estraïne,
En guerdon des mauux qu'ay a tort
Pour ma maistresse souveraine.
- 1407 It seems to have been possible to rhyme the word *lese* using either a long or short vowel (cf. 4718, MED examples, and *LGW* 1022 and 1545).
- 1423 *speche*: throughout the work the poet generally holds to a rhetoric of written documents and writing in reference to the poetry. *Speche* may here be an exception, or it may be taken to mean "discourse."
- rewdisshe*: *rewd* would suit the meter better.
- 1426 *that*: that which
- 1428 On the use of *nerē* for *nigh*, see Mustanoja, 342.
- 1436 The double virgule after "come" appears to be added later, as no space was left for it in the line.
- 1440-41 Although the envoy is often the place to refer to the act of writing, *balade* as a verb is otherwise unattested, and Charles may here have simply borrowed it from Fr.
- sport*: in this case the word probably carries overtones of amorous dalliance.
- 1447 *avisyng*: the poet wanted the word *avisement* but needed an *-yng* rhyme (the same is true of *turn-yng*, *will-yng* "[ill] will"). *Avisement* is the less usual form (see 2817).
- 1450 Though the poet speaks here of Fortune's wheel turning, it is phrased as a message from Hope, not an actual occurrence.
- 1469 Fortune: Miscounting minims, the scribe apparently read *fortime* for *fortune* and wrote *Fortyme* (note *fortime*, 2813).
- 1490 The original line was clear, though bungled by the scribe (perhaps because it is a May poem): "Far—nay too far—from my dear lady." The correction of *Fer* to *thys* is not an obvious improvement because the revisor neglected to erase *may* (see textual note).
- 1494 May: his use of the word to mean "young woman," used here as a form of address, involves a play on words. As he writes an apologia to the flower (in the Flower and Leaf "game," B 66), he is here apologizing to the month of May for not being able to serve her "now to yere." We shall never know whether this is one of the poems addressed to such a may,

- perhaps because he has had to forgo the pleasures of a planned maying.
- 1499 *infosterid*: S&D gloss "kept"; I have adopted the MED gloss (MED reads "*ifosterid* [instructed]: *fig.* dominate the mind or heart of").
- 1503 S&D suggest "in thought *rekklus*" as the possible original (in the copy the scribe was working from) and further suggest that the scribe mistook the abbreviation in his copy when he wrote *rekkeles* ("reckless") and for some unexplained reason inserted *and*, thus spoiling both sense and meter. Whoever made the erasure in the line apparently planned to use the first letter of *and* as the article (this construction matches that found in the marginal version). The meter of the line as I have printed it is acceptable only if *prayer* is monosyllabic; it must rhyme with *feere*. It is probable that this correction supersedes the reading written in the margin by Revisor B, and, unusually, erased ("As a reklewse sso leve y in pensir").
- 1511 Hermyte: picks up *reklewse* from the previous ballade (line 1503).
- 1518 *where* often replaces *place*. When used together (the place where), the relative is usually followed not by the infinitive, but by a clause. Charles may have intended *wherin* or some such but omitted the second syllable for metrical reasons.
- 1524 *worth*: the scribe confuses *worthi* and *worth* (cf. 71).
- 1540-42 Both rhyme words have been altered (*was/lace*), but it is not possible to read the original rhymes.
- 1548 In this ballade, the lover challenges Daunger to single combat. Similarly, because his lady refuses to see him or speak to him, Oton de Grandson's narrator challenges one of the most valiant fighters in the English host, John of Cornwall, to single combat in order to fulfill his wish for death yet maintain his honor ("Lectres closes," Piaget, 424-28).
- Speaking of the Fr counterpart of this poem, Wilkins says, "Formally, this ballade is notable for the extreme length of its stanzas, fifteen lines each, a sure sign that the verse has been liberated from the constraints of music" (*One Hundred Ballades*, 140, n. 89).
- 1553 On why: see 947n.
- 1560 *carell*: monosyllabic (cf. 1581).
- 1562 For Daunger a contradiction in terms, of course.
- 1568 The line is too long but shows no sign of correction; perhaps it is intended to emphasize the exclamation.
- 1570 *amendes*: like other diction in this poem, a legal term (see Alford, s.v. *amendes*).
- 1572 *cry mercy*: plead for pardon (usually on one's knees), Alford, s.v. *crien merci*.
- 1574 The lover is acting as champion of the God of Love, whom Daunger has refused to accept as his rightful lord, thus acting rebelliously.
- 1578 Perhaps related to the motto of the Order of the Garter: "Honi soit qui mal y pense" (Shame to him who thinks evil of it)?
- 1580-81 Cf. *Pars T* 258, and see Alford, s.v. *cherl*.
Fr: Ce vous vient de mauvais talant,
Nourry en courage felon.

- 1583 *oure*: here and in the following line the scribe has written *yowre* for *oure* (the only MS spelling).
- 1584 *tyme of lustynes*: S&D gloss the line "to occupy ourselves in lovemaking." MED is conservative, glossing *lustynes* with definitions that hold to the "joy" end of the spectrum. I have recorded both in the glossary. Cf. *T&C* 3.177.
- 1586 *vertu* and *gracious deseraunce*: in this context of such dalliance it is difficult to see what place *vertu* has except that, perhaps, of manly excellence. *Deseraunce* is unrecorded; in both instances (see also 1759) the word is taken directly from Fr to provide a rhyme.
- 1587 The line is short but shows no sign of correction; perhaps the gravity of the address should be drawn out.
- 1588 *thi willis*: Fr. "voz vouloirs."
- 1589 *batell*: see Alford, s.v. *bataille*.
- 1593 with *myschaunce!*: "confound you!"; see *SumT* 2215 and Masui, 257 (par. 136).
- 1595 *chesen . . . to thee*: cf. OED, s.v. *choose* 10 *refl.*: to set or devote oneself to.
- 1597 The line is unfinished.
- 1604–20 *Lust* must be an error for *luste adj.*, for it rhymes with *aduersite*. In the second stanza, then, *parte* rhymes with *slepe*, and in the third, *happe*, with *me*.
- 1609 The scribe has omitted the large initial letter (usually followed by an ordinary capital) probably because he started at the top of the page, forgetting that he was not continuing a stanza from the previous one.
- 1614 *bi Seynt Quyntyne*: ?perhaps an oblique reference to the restoration of the sight of a noble Roman lady who found the saint's body when it floated to the surface of a river and gave it an honorable burial (*Golden Legend*, 31 October).
- 1617–20 Fr: *Helas! quant vendra la journee*
Qu'ainsi avenir me pourra?
Ma maistresse tresdesiree,
Pensez vous que brief avendra?
- 1623 *likyng*: for the *adj* form, see Chaucer's *T&C* 1.309, *Rom* 868 and 1564.
- 1629–57 *short game of tablis*: see Introduction, "Chess and Tables." The "short game" may be a reference to a French form of the game, since Strutt calls the E game (*Ludus Anglicorum*) the longest (248). Though I have not found a description of the rules for this particular kind of tables, Murray explains that most medieval games of tables differ only in the initial arrangement of the pieces, the points of re-entry and of home, and the number and method of using the dice (*History of Chess*, 703, see also his "Game of Tables"). In the first stanza, the lover apparently plays well (assuming that he has followed the skilled advice of Love, who has been tutoring him for some time). He must keep his "entir poynt" (Fr "point d'attente": point at which you must wait in order to enter the game); if he keeps "this poynt" (i.e., keeps his opponent from blocking with two or more playing pieces the point-shaped place marker on the board on which

he must enter pieces on the board), the lover will win in the end.

In the second stanza, the narrator is prevented from playing because his opponent has taken (at least) one of his men, and he is not allowed to have another turn until he throws a number which allows him to "enter" the piece on the board again. If this reconstruction of the game is correct, his opponent has meanwhile apparently blocked one or more points by placing two or more playing pieces on it (1637). The opponent can then take a series of turns, as long as the combination of his block or blocks and the numbers thrown prevent the narrator from re-entering the game. (The narrator may not play any other man while he has a piece to enter.) For a discussion of a variety of forms of the game of tables see Strutt, 248-49, and Murray, *History of Chess*, 569, 702-3. Tables was frequently associated with chess (see, e.g., *FkIT* 900, *BD* 51); cf. B 61.

Fr: Car tousjours me charge garder

Le point d'atentte seulement,

En me disant que vrayement

Se ce point lye scay tenir

.....

Je suy pris et ne puis entrer

Ou point que desire souvent

1646 wayith: the word *balauunce* makes clear that *wayfith* ought to be *wayith* "weighs." The scribe seems to have been thinking of the reflex of "waver" or "waive." In any case it comes to more or less the same thing.

Weele and *woo* would be the logical entities to be weighed, but the line seems to say that they weigh the speaker (perhaps, as elsewhere, an otherwise unattested reflexive construction: *me wayith?*). Perhaps he intends something like "I weigh [my] weal and woe against one another in a pair of scales"—and it is doubtful which will be the heavier (see 6244n, 6370n). (Cf. *KQ*, st. 111.) The comparison does not appear in the Fr version: "Fortune fait souvent tourner / Les dez contre moy mallement."

1656 iupart: the word is nicely defined in the OED: A position in a game, . . .

In which the chances of winning and losing hang in the balance; . . . an undecided state of affairs (s.v. jeopardy 2). Cf. *T&C* 2.465-66.

1667 is: probably omitted inadvertently. Both sense and meter would seem to require it.

1678-79 Fr: Car en tous lieux ou est congneue

Chascun la nomme la plus belle.

1692 may: Cf. *KnT* 1497ff., and Lyd. *Kalendare* 129: "gadre us floures of heuenly maye."

1695 forshyuere: found only here with *for-* prefix, but cf. *PF* 493: "That wel wende I the wode hadde all toshyvered" and Lyd *BlkKn* 45-46: "So loude songe that al the wode rong / Lyke as it shulde shiver in peces smale."

1701 affoyle: apparently appears nowhere else in Fr or in E. MED gives one instance of *foilen v* (1) from *foil* (cf. OF *foillir*, come into leaf) used as a surgical term. Hammond (*English Verse* 471, 14.13) suggests that the word *trees* may be disyllabic, citing *PF* 173 and *GP* 607.

1703 his fest to: for this word order, cf. 2474.

1705 on whi: see 947n.

Fr: Bien çay, mon cuer, que faulx Dangier
Vous fait mainte paine souffrir.

1707-8 Fr: Car il vous fait trop eslongnier

Celle qui est vostre desir.

1709-10 The usual first treatment for lovesickness is distraction. Cf. *T&C* 5.388-90.

1718 In the MS, the scribe has forgotten to leave room for a two-line capital and has consequently not capitalized the second letter of *As*.

wisshis: stressed on the second syllable (rhyme: *ther nys*/etc.).

1724 oft: "any," "at all" would make good sense, but would duplicate the rhyme word of 1721 (and Charles never uses the shorter spelling of the word with this meaning). "Often" or "repeatedly" is less graceful, but possible. The poet is attempting the *tour de force* of using ostensibly the same word in four different rhymes (also 1742-43) with four different meanings.

1725 This ballade is especially useful for the study of Charles's methods of adapting the Fr poems into E. As S&D note, this is the only case in which Charles utilizes an entirely new refrain line (and envoy) in a poem that has a Fr counterpart. His replacement of "en esperant, qu'au par aler, de mille l'un puist avenir" with "in dowl therin ther were mysdemyng oft thorough false conspire of sum vnhappy wight" (1724-25) demonstrates the radical change he has made in the tone of the poem. He apparently worked from the Fr poem making a number of interesting "lateral" changes playing off specific Fr words. In 1727, for instance, he has transformed "[jamais] mon cuer ne se peut d'eulx lasser" into "[neuyr more] kan myn hert cesse the woo which is him wrought," playing on *lasser* and *laisser*. In 1730, the word *baytith* is suggested to him by the Fr *esbat* (he uses a similar play in 1266, see note). In the previous ballade, "disportis" (1710) translates "esbat," proving that this is not simply a "mistranslation" by a translator. In 1736, "and so with Loue doth fester his woundis" replaces "et tient avec Amour ses plais," with plays on *plais/plaies* and perhaps *tient/tent* (though here his wounds fester because they receive no *tent*). The resulting ballade is anything but a close translation of the Fr. It does not number among Charles's more elegant E poems but demonstrates his ever-increasing attempts to stretch his E vocabulary and his straining away from his Fr "originals" in an attempt to write a truly E poem rather than simply to produce a translation. This kind of play on "sound alikes" between Fr and E is very common in this work.

The lover's wishes are treated at length again at the end of his jubilee (4389ff.).

1730 baytith: probably an aphetic form of *abatith*. Though MED gives no such meaning as "becomes dejected" under *bayten*, it does so under *abayten*, citing *Urban* 29 (see OED, s.v. *abate* *v*¹ II.6).

1736 woundis: stress on the second syllable (rhyme: *me is*).

1739 ioyis: the plural form corrects both the meter and the agreement.

- 1745 sought: S&D suggest "sought, i.e., as an enemy," but the line is still difficult; *thou haue* suggests some sort of transcription error or partial revision.
- 1759 Octosyllabic. S&D suggest that the line follows the meter of the Fr, but this leaves unexplained the occasional octosyllabic lines in places where there is no Fr counterpart for the verse. Perhaps the word *callid* has been omitted.
- 1765 contrary: elsewhere the word is trisyllabic, but the length and cadence of the line suggest that here it is disyllabic. Perhaps Charles had the word *contrayre* in mind.
Fr: Mais il trouvera le rebours.
- 1766 vengeance: parallel with *hatrede*, the word seems to refer to a characteristic of Daunger rather than his acts; I have thus glossed "vengefulness."
- 1771-72 The scribe wrote *wassayle* (influenced, perhaps, by "we assayle" in the following line); OED cites the *Laud Troy-book* (c. 1400, line 9020) for the ironic use of *wassayle* as "sudden attack." Revisor B altered the reading to *wache*, which improves the meter.
Fr: faisons bon guet sans decevance
Et assaillons par ordonnance,
Mon cueur, Dangier qui nous fait tort.
- 1775 The shift of the meaning of *keep* ("desire") in this last refrain line is very effective.
- 1778 ravishe: MED cites this line as a unique instance of the word in the passive sense without *be*. Charles may have omitted it because of the meter.
Fr: Si ravy seray de liesse.
- 1786 as this: thus; MED describes this use as "vaguely emphatic or deictic," s.v. as 3b (b).
- 1790 doon . . . observaunce: S&D refer to this phrase as "a Chaucerian favorite."
- 1796 Daunger is the eavesdropper.
- 1797 with: Charles often uses unusual prepositions (*on* or *to* is more usual), unless we should take *with* as "forthwith" (immediately).
- 1801 Cf. 4364; the meter and cadence of the line suggest that a syllable has been omitted.
- 1807 out: here, and in 2012 and 2018, someone erased the first three letters of *without* (leaving *hout*), suggesting that whoever it was (and in the first two cases, at least, the one-syllable form improves the meter) was accustomed to a form with *h*. Note the spelling *wehout* in line 10 of the ballade in Appendix I (no. 7).
- 1822-26 The poet seems to be playing on *dewre/dewryng/dewe* in this stanza (as well as perhaps *devoure/deservith*).
- 1829 geue me thus an horne: this is not a reference to cuckolding in the narrow sense (since the lover and lady are not husband and wife), but to the lady's bestowing of her affections elsewhere. The narrator accuses Hope of "giving him a horn" (i.e., scorning him) because he has not intervened to unite the lovers and foster their relationship. S&D quote

Court of Love 1390, for which see Skeat's note in *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, 553.

- 1830 make light of: this may be the first recorded instance of this expression, and the only instance of *noforsyng*.
- 1844 Dyane day: Benvenuto Cellini first deciphered this reference (228). He adds that the first of May fell on a Monday in 1419, 1424, and 1430, but "the first in moneth of May" could mean "the first Monday in May" as easily as "the first day of May." He does not explain why the day is seen as masculine in the first two stanzas (1845, 1848, 1850, etc.) but feminine in the third (see 1866n).
- 1854 bi this day: I have glossed as an asseveration, but the phrase may also be taken as "for today."
- 1856-57 The word *tranquillite* probably suggested itself to the poet by association with the storminess of the first stanza. The poet seems to mean "comfort," but expresses it as "peace, tranquillity." The statement is proverbial, "misery loves company" (see *CA* 2.263; *CYT* G747; *T&C* 1.709).
- 1858 profite: S&D list this word under *preef ppl*. The line could be read with either meaning: "I have tested (proved) the truth of this proverb" or "I have benefitted (profited) thus from the truth of this proverb" (i.e., the day has borne me good company). Given the spelling *prove* as the participial spelling of *preef* in 1160, I have opted for the latter reading.
- 1866 he: I have emended *she* to *he* for the sake of consistency, but the poet may be thinking of the lady as well as the month here (May is personified as a *princesse* in R 11).
- 1873-1927 Charles may have placed a chant royal (five-stanza "ballade" with envoy) here in order to mark the culmination of the love affair proper with an exchange of vows, in order to make the death of the lady even more poignant. In the following ballade the lover hears of the lady's illness, and in Ballade 57 she dies. The French counterpart of this second chant royal is said to "rapelle la solennité du pacte de mariage" (Poirion, *Le Poète*, 366). It is not necessary to read the poem as a report of such a ceremony, however; it more likely represents a solemn exchange of vows within the pseudo-world of *fin' amor*, with its own ceremonies and "laws" (cf. 1106n, 1109n). On the form, see Introduction, "The Ballade."
- 1882 S&D call the construction of the refrain an infinitive absolute and note that it is awkward (302 [42 in 1st ed.]; see n2 for parallel construction). This may apply to the other refrain lines, but here the construction may involve an ellipsis of *gafe* + refl. pronoun.
Fr: Quant vous retins premierement
Ma Dame, ma seule maistresse.
- 1883 deservance: created to provide a rhyme.
- 1924 steele: a type of hardness, i.e., trueness.
- 1928 This ballade marks a major turning point in the work. The lady's illness, announced here, is followed by a ballade of false hope, then by the announcement of her death and a series of mourning poems.

entresse: cf. *entryse* (912). The form with (*s*)*se* may vary from that used in 2666 (*entre*) because of the exigencies of rhyme.

Fr: qui a laissié entrer.

1953 Which is, of course, no comfort. The heart, for once, sees the truth.

1956 There are various metrical possibilities: *harkith*, *prayeth*, and *humbly* may each be either mono- or disyllabic in this work.

1960 this othir day: "next" would be an attractive gloss, but the addition of *tofore* suggests that the phrase simply means "(more) recently" or "yesterday"

Fr: l'autre jour.

1966 The line is unfinished.

1969 Goodrich seems to suggest that the refrain refers to the birth of a child (*Themes*, 111). Given the fact that this ballade precedes and in some way (if only by way of false hope) announces the death of the lady, this interpretation seems fanciful—nor does anything in the ballade point to this interpretation. Charles's first wife, Isabelle, died in childbirth in 1409, but the lady of these poems is sick and needs to be "helid" (in B 55). In this ballade she "was woxen hool" (1962). The tidings the heart wants are confirmation of his lady's good health; there is neither mention nor implication of pregnancy or birth, which would be wildly out of place in a courtly work such as this. Champion's note on the Fr counterpart reads, "Sur des nouvelles meilleures de la santé de sa femme" (555).

1979 The refrain here seems to be an added plea that what the lover has reported to the heart (the lady's recovery) continue to be true.

1985 gaf: S&D suggest that the word "has come from 'gan', probably through 'gawe'," but see OED, s.v. give IV 13b: "to apply or set oneself to do something," citing *Cursor M.*, "Sco gaf hir al to murn and care."

1992–93 In 1464 Charles had a book made which contained the office of St. Gabriel (*La Borde*, 7035, Champion, *La Librairie*, 78).

Fr: . . . la messe qu'il nommoit

"Saint Gabriel bonne nouvelle."

1994 The opening of this poem is psychologically realistic: the lover's anger against death is itself a way of coping with grief. Hammond lists a series of "outcries against Death" which bear some resemblance to this poem (*English Verse*, 471).

2000 leuyr . . . forto dy: for this construction see *MchT* 2163.

2001 Cf. *Bo* 2.pr.2.68–72, where Philosophy applies the word *tragedyes* to the stories of the lives of Cresus and St. Paul; Chaucer *gloses* the term with the word *dite*. Our narrator, however, applies the word to his own situation, evidence perhaps of his awareness that he is turning his experience into literature as it happens (or perhaps that Charles recognized the literary sublimation involved in this ballade sequence).

2007 Hammond cites a number of instances of the word *vnweldynes*, as well as of the phrase "alone am y out compane" in line 2012 (*English Verse*, 471).

2026 To this point the E ballades run exactly parallel to their Fr counterparts, but beginning with this ballade, three poems which do not occur in the

- French sequence are inserted (58–60). B 62 is likewise an “inserted” ballade without Fr counterpart (as is B 74), but apart from that the series continues through B 66. The “inserted” ballades are all mourning poems, one of which (B 59) is a reworking of a Fr poem by Christine de Pisan. Many commentators have felt the “sincerity” of the poet’s grief in these poems (B 57 through B 74) and attributed it to the poet’s response to the literal death of one or another lady (usually his first wife, Isabelle, or his second, Bonne), but Charles may equally well have written some of them at a later date than the rest of the ballades in this sequence (see Introduction, “Order of Composition”). All are exceptionally well-crafted poems.
- 2027 bote: the word might be taken (as S&D do) as “profit,” “good,” but given that the list is not a general one but a very specific one referring to the perfections of the (newly lost) lady, perhaps the poet intended the meaning “goodness,” a meaning OED and MED do not support. S&D suggest *als* or *alle* for *also* to improve the meter.
- 2038 Because the correction of *care* to *cave* makes no sense to me, I have relegated it to the textual notes (as in 2508). S&D gloss *care-sewte* “mourning attire,” without further explanation, though in that case for would make better sense than *of*. Charles may be playing on *care* as a kind of cloth and as a state of being; perhaps we are to think of a shroud, since it is also apparently the attire of his dead lady. A preceding preposition seems to have been omitted, though the line has ten syllables as it stands (the preposition *to* is likewise omitted in the previous line).
- 2042–43 The idea of being “equal to zero” echoes the *nought* of the refrain. The idea of having no value but giving value to some one else (as zero does to ten), is apparently proverbial (cf. MED, s.v. *cifre*; *KQ* st. 28 and Norton-Smith’s note 194–96; *Richard the Redeles* 4.53–54; and S&D 2042n).
- 2046 The repeated use of *alone* in this line anticipates the repetition of the word in the following ballade.
- 2048 foon: the plural is used simply for the rhyme.
- 2054–81 The *Alone* which stands at the beginning of each line does not simply function syntactically as a recurring adverb. It sometimes stands completely outside the syntactical structure and, like the tolling of a bell, punctuates rhythmically the lamentations of the poet (e.g., 2064–65, 2071–72, sometimes, as in 2067, followed by an omitted beat). This is emphasized by the virgules the scribe has inserted after each *Alone*.
- On this ballade, an adaptation or imitation of a lyric by Christine de Pisan (“Seulete suy et seulete vueil estre,” Varty, 7), see Urwin, and Cigada, “Christine de Pisan.” Fox translates the opening lines of her poem thus:
- Alone am I, and alone I wish to be;
 Alone has my sweet love left me.
 Alone am I, without companion or master;
 Alone am I, sad and grieving,
 Alone am I, unhappy and languishing,

Alone am I, most forlorn of women,
Alone am I, without my love remaining.

(*Middle Ages*, 302)

2056 Octosyllabic.

2062 *wo . . . bigon* ("deeply grieved") receives double intensification from the addition of the superlative ending *-full* as well as *most*. This kind of intensification is not unusual.

2072 *are* has been overwritten as *and*: in its original form, the line would mean something like "I prefer to avoid all company." In its altered version it could be read as an address to all people to witness the narrator's solitariness, placed between references to his life and his death.

2080 willith: an apparently ungrammatical form.

2082-89 The use of oxymorons to describe love is commonplace (for the Chaucerian version see *Rom* 4703ff.). Charles varies the formula by applying the paradoxes to his grief at the lady's death. The poet seems to have invented the word *dedy* to match *livy*.

2084 Apparently the word *lengthith* is intended to imply *lijf*, though the poet uses both in 1360.

2090 The poet describes many strange relationships with aspects of his own physical being. Here he calls on his own spirit to cease breathing, then moves on to exhort his heart to burst, etc.

formatt: looks forward to the chess imagery of the following ballade.

2091 *karkas*: the poet probably had both definitions in mind: "dead body" and a contemptuous term for a living person. This is a poem full of ambiguity and self-loathing.

2095 The rhymes *leche* (like), *reche* (rich), and perhaps *eche* (*eken*, cure) sit oddly with *spechelseche* (cf. *Anel* 76-77: *lychelriche*). See Daunt, 140.

2109 The refrain line has been omitted in the MS. I have added it in square brackets and included it in the line numbering so as not to diverge from Steele's numbering.

2110 This ballade is a tour de force of elaborate word play. Commonly associated with love in the late Middle Ages, chess displays many of its metaphorical possibilities here. Chess is frequently associated with death, as in *BD* and in the visual arts (see, e.g., the chessboard in a stained glass window in which a bishop turns away from a skeletal figure of Death in Hussey, 140; also Murray, *History of Chess*, 536a).

In Lydgate's translation of *Les Échecs* [or *Éschez*] *Amoureux*, *Deduit* (son of Venus and brother of Cupid) is a god of games, playing not only

At mereles, dees, and tables . . .

But best and most specialy

At the Chesse he dooth excelle

That philomestor, soth to telle . . .

(*R&S*, lines 2404, 2406-8)

According to Murray, the game played in *Les Éschez* by the lover and his lady is described in some detail (477ff.).

2112 *kepte eche poynt*: S&D suggest that the phrase is borrowed from back-

gammon (i.e., tables, cf. 1634), but in that case it is difficult to see what it would mean. The sense is that he kept each *piece* without losing any of them, at first. Perhaps a scribal error is involved.

2115 Strictly speaking, *ouyrthrew* cannot apply very neatly to the lover's *game*, unless Fortune overturned the chessboard. There are in fact numerous instances in history and art of chessboards being literally overthrown (Murray, *History of Chess*, 443, 740–46; Strutt, 251), but the image makes more sense, perhaps, in light of the resonances of both words. The game (in the original sense of “joy,” “pleasure”) is destroyed by Fortune, who casts the lover into a state of dejection. The game is also the game of love, which Fortune (in league with Daunger) brings to nought by allowing or causing the lady's death. The image of the turning of the wheel (2130) is combined with the idea of bringing the lover's suit to nought, but neither use applies directly to the game. In B 46, Fortune turns the *dice* against the lover (1645–46; cf. also *ouyrdresse* 2130).

Fr: Et par meschief, que maudite soit elle!

2116 lady: on the role of the queen in the late medieval game of chess, see Introduction, “Chess and Tables.” In the proof stage of this book, it came to my attention that Steven Guthrie is doing exciting research on medieval chess and literature that may very well supersede the hypotheses I set forth in my introduction concerning the role of the queen in this poem and in Chaucer's *BD*. For a similar, though brief, use of chess imagery, see *KQ*, st. 168–69.

2117 this may y se and say: this has the ring of a common asseveration, but the MED does not record it.

2118 make a lady newe: make a new queen by reaching the far end of the board with a pawn (as in draughts or checkers). The fact that he would consider a new lady (an idea repeated with each refrain line and then taken up again in the next ballade), however briefly and rhetorically, takes on a different cast in view of the lover's receptiveness to the suggestions of Venus later in the work (cf. 2675). The pun on *make* (“choose as mate”) probably does not extend to “mate with, marry.”

2120 nere: probably used in place of *nigh* because of the exigencies of rhyme (see Mustanoja, 329, 394).

2122 all my ward: a chess term (see Murray, *History of Chess*, 499).

2125 pley: though the primary, surface meaning of the word is “playing of the game of chess,” in this case the word carries overtones both of “pleasure” and of “the turn of Fortune's wheel.” Cf. “Fortune's play”: *Bo* 2.pr2.56 and *Lyd TB* 2.2031.

2126 Chess is a game on which men lay large wagers, as this lover has.

2128–29 Charles uses alliteration rarely but effectively.

seytfull: Charles apparently created this aphetic form to fit his meter (see 6103, where it also alliterates); he seems particularly fond of aphetic forms.

2130 ouyrdresse: MED cites this instance as well as 2373, translating “overturn.” S&D, following the Fr (“tourner a rebours”), suggest “reverse,” which seems to make better sense. Here it is the opposite of *dressen*, in the

sense of to arrange or put (moves) in order (i.e., decide on a strategy in the game).

2131 there or here: reversed to suit the rhyme.

2132 The suddenness of Fortune's attack suggests the increased "speed of attack and defence" that Eales attributes to the new chess (see Introduction, "Courtly Occupations: Chess and Tables"), in which "the consequences of a single weak move could be much greater" (77)—as opposed to the medieval game, which could be agonizingly slow (69, 78).

2147–48 At a number of points Charles links ballades, especially in the early poems. This reinforces the assumption that many were composed in more or less the same period. Here the poet borrows the *lady newe* from the chess imagery of B 61 and turns his thoughts to the phoenix. The phoenix is traditionally the reincarnation of a phoenix which immolates itself after living five hundred years. The force of the refrain derives from its absoluteness: the lady's beauty is as unequivocal and her death is as certain and as irrevocable as the fact that the phoenix lives without heir. Unlike the phoenix, the lady has no power to reincarnate herself, and the lover refuses to make (take) a *lady newe*. This is one of the finest of the grieving poems.

Having read the whole work, the reader may see in this poem a suggestion that it is possible to make a new lady and that this *fenyx* might perhaps have an heir after all, in the form of the lady of the second ballade sequence.

2162 cherry fair: a common medieval "gather ye rosebuds" phrase (used by both Chaucer and Gower). Brand refers to cherry fairs as taking place (where else?) in cherry orchards (2.457).

2165 Once again the scribe (or the poet) seems to have trouble with "weighed" and "waived" (cf. 1646).

2166 Daunt points out (148) that *layre*, supported by the rhyme, is a Northern form of *lore* (Charles's more frequent spelling). See also 4380, 6468.

2175 here: S&D suggest that the word be glossed "rape" (deduced from the verb *herie*, "to plunder") or that it is a scribal error for *bere*, "bier" (though, as they admit, that word is used in 2196, and Charles never seems to use the same rhyme word twice with the same meaning). Though not elegant, the line may be read as "death has divested this world here of her" or "has stripped her from this world here." *Here* simply provides a rhyme.

2179 allys: monosyllabic (a unique spelling).

2195–96 Yit: otherwise *hit* simply repeats *Hit*.

S&D take *to day* as "today," but more likely the lover's heart is filled until, being over-full, it threatens to cause his death (cf. 721, 2533, etc.). It therefore makes him wish that he had prepared his bier.

clothid had my bere: a variation on the more usual expression: "to clothe one's grave" (here and in 4229; see T&C 5.1418). Charles uses the "correct" expression in 2421 and 4479 and a variation with *sepulture* in 2038 and 2593. MED records only the clothing of graves, but *clothe* can

mean to prepare, e.g., a bed, so that "to prepare a bier as if it were a bed" is not a very linguistically innovative expression (cf. 2763, 4299).

2198–2205 The first stanza of this ballade seems to contain no main clause and have no grammatical connection with what follows, unless each of the first two stanzas is treated as dependent on "Me thenkith," in the third (2214).

2200 S&D cite for comparison *KnT* 2006: "his herte blood."

2207 Dido, Cresseid, Alcest, and Eleyne: Poirion identifies Creseide as "héroïne de Boccace" (*Le Lexique*, s.v. Creseide). Charles's naming of Dido and Alcest may point to his reading of *LGW*, but such lists were common.

Fr: Creseide, Yseud, Elaine.

2230 expelle: the scribe has written *excelle* in error, perhaps under the influence of the rhetoric of the previous line.

Fr: pour oster merencolie.

2231–34 See Introduction, "Courtly Occupations," for a discussion of the Flower and the Leaf. The "game" is here associated with May, as it is in *LGW*. The narrator makes an elegant distinction between the trivial, annual choosing of flower or leaf and a more serious and permanent choice. The present choice of the leaf, determined by lot, is part of the social game of love, whereas his permanent choice of the flower is represented as a serious decision made in "real life." What we have in fact is a double gambit, on two levels, in the game (see Stevens, 180–82). What is odd is that the "flower" does not seem to perceive the situation this way (see 2269–72).

2238 The "choice" is explained in such a way (here and in 2232 and 2277) that it is clear that the matter was decided by lot. The "truth" of the matter may be that the narrator does not intend to take responsibility for his apparent fickleness; the reader must decide on what level the truth (if there is one) is to be found.

2245 me: omitted after *to*.

2246 Octosyllabic.

2248 schesse: *here*, the original reading, was probably a scribal error for *bere*, though the revisor (or Charles, on rereading) may not have realized that, and so changed it to *schesse* ("choose"). This stanza is very typical of Charles, smoothly modulating from phrase to phrase.

Fr: Pour ce la fueille porteray

Cest an. . .

2250–51 Fr: Et a mon povair me tendray

Entierement de sa partie.

2263 This (mini) dream vision is the poet's first experiment with the genre.

B 70 has a bit of the feel of a dream vision, though the narrator is not asleep. B 72 borrows some imagery from the genre in its opening lines but begins with the awakening of the narrator. All of these ideas are reused in the second dream vision. The poem forms a pair with the previous poem.

2264 The idea is a common one in this kind of love poetry (cf. *LBD* 1).

2277–78 this heyre: Fr: "cest an."

The speaker feels that it is perfectly all right for him to serve the leaf, since he does not really care about it and did not choose it with any real conviction (cf. 2290). *FL* has a similar startling reversal, but in the opposite direction; after witnessing the apparently serious representation of loyal and frivolous love by two groups of knights and ladies, the narrator is asked by one of them, "... and which woll ye honour, / ... this yeere, the Leafe or the Flour?" (573-74).

2285 The flower that appears to the lover is not the lady, but in some sense her representative, the head of the lady's "faction" (Flower with a capital F), as this line makes clear. Since his flower has been taken away, it is only reasonable, he thinks, that he serve the leaf.

2296 The reader is perhaps being presented with a love problem: what are we to think of the speaker's defense? And what about its juxtaposition with the following ballade? The Fr version is followed by the counterpart of B 70.

2297 At this point, the order of ballades differs from that of the Fr. Assuming that the arrangement of the Fr poems is the earlier of the two, B 67 and B 68 are placed earlier in the sequence (the Fr versions occur between the counterparts of B 72 and 73), and then the series continues in parallel through B 73 (B 74 has no Fr counterpart), except that B 69 and B 70 are in reverse order from the Fr sequence. In this process Fr ballades LXVII and LXVIII are displaced to the second ballade sequence (B 101 and B 107). See Appendix II, "Index of ... Counterparts."

B 67 and B 68 are mourning poems that fit very well with what precedes. Ballades 69-73 are more problematic. Line 2376 mentions the *dowbilnes* of love. In another context this would be taken to refer to the lady's fickleness, but here it may perhaps be taken as a reference to the lover's loss (cf. 2380-82). B 70 fits well among the mourning poems, looking both forward to the vision of Venus and back to the first love affair. B 71, likewise, may be read as suitable in the context of the lover's mourning, though S&D object on the grounds that the poet does not mention the lady's death (the same is true of the ballade that follows it). B 73 is a general ballade on the difficulties of love, and B 74, in which the poet longs for death, might be seen as the logical end to the series of mourning poems before the solution presented by Age in the vision that follows.

It is true that there are touches in these last poems of humor and irony that imply that the lover is not going to give up on life and love. "That all is broke and newe to make ayene" (B 69) may mean that the lover's life is shattered and he must find a way to rebuild it, or it may be taken to imply the possibility of a new lady in his future; the word *make* is suggestive, and Venus picks up this suggestion in the following ballade, though the lover rejects it. The refrain of B 71 ("Without so be the wounde renewe agayn") also suggests the eventuality that love might be rekindled. If the poet meant to suggest that, after a period of almost frenzied mourning, the lover regains his composure and begins to look to the future—a future which may include another lady—then the reordering of the ballades is certainly effective.

2302-3 were: *was* must be an error.

made als to the same: S&D suggest “[made] in the same style,” i.e., imbued with sorrow, but it is also possible to take *made* as “matched,” i.e., the tomb matches the torches (in being made of sorrow). It comes to the same thing. The lines are octosyllabic, as are 2305-6.

2304 depaynted: cf. *T&C* 5.1599.

2305 The tomb is an oblong stone sepulchre with a carved inscription running around the upper moulding.

2307 The omission of an unstressed syllable between *all* and *worldly* gives the line a heavy, somber rhythm.

2310-11 the safere doth token trouthe: “it makeþ þe hert stedfast in godnes” (Evans and Serjeantson, 102); the passage quoted by S&D is part of a poem in which *all* the stones named are said to be *stidefast*. Cf. 1153-54. Poirion suggests that gold (not to be confused with yellow, the color of jealousy and cowardice) is the color of happiness because it is the “symbole du succès” (*Le Lexique*, s.v. or; see also s.v. saffir).

2314 flowren: echoes the two previous ballades.

2320 Because *hir* is repeated in the following line, I have emended to *the*.

2328 Noon: S&D read *Noou* and gloss “?now,” but the crossover to “serious” religious terms that their reading implies is unlikely in this context.

Fr: Si croy que Dieu la voulu traire

Vers lui, pour parer son repaire

De Paradis ou sont les saints;

Car c'est d'elle bel parement,

Que l'en nommoit communement

Le tresor de tous biens mondains.

2330 There seems to be a syllable missing before “this” (perhaps ?*as this*).

2331 The narrator uses the plural apparently because he imagines himself in the context of “all the world” (2322).

therto: I have glossed “besides,” but the word might be an error for *therfor*.

2373 amverse: this problematic word, which Charles uses repeatedly, does not find a place in the MED. Chances are it is his “English” version of Fr *avers* or *envers* (*anvers/auvers/advers*), a word which he does not use in his Fr poems, or perhaps it is a form of ME *inverse*.

ouydrres: see 2130n.

2378 S&D suggest that *more* here and *moche* (2384) have been interchanged, though they do not say how this might have happened (2378n).

gentilnes: Charles uses the form with *n* only twice (against twelve times without), both times in rhyme position (on Chaucer’s careful distinction between *gentillesse* and *gentilnesse*, see Baker, *Variorum*, 123n, 98-99).

2382 Then: *when* in 2380 suggests that *That* should be *Then*; S&D term the word redundant, retained to keep the meter.

2383 yet: repeated twice.

2384 moche or lesse: S&D suggest that either Charles adapted the phrase from the Chaucerian “moche or lyte” or *moche* is an error for *more* (2378n).

- Given his use of *lite* or *lasse* in the previous stanza, he may have thought it an unremarkable construction.
- 2395 Hevynes: echoes the word from 2393, linking the two ballades. Utley includes this ballade among his "Dialogues, Debates, & Catechisms" (Hartung, 3.728). For a discussion of the (closely related) Fr counterpart, see Calin, "Density," 97–100. The Fr ("En la forest d'Ennuyeuse Tristesse") makes an interesting comparison with his later and more famous ballade that begins "En la forest de Longue Actente" (B CV).
- 2396 The Fr version of this ballade is not a May poem. Charles seems particularly attracted to the juxtaposition of dolor with times and occasions traditionally associated with joy (but see Gower as source, Introduction, "Sources and Influences: Gower").
- 2399–2402 S&D read *As* (2400) as an expletive and *oon* as the object of *convey*. I think the narrator's response is more informal: (where am I going?) where Fortune sends me—like someone who is exiled from joy (much as I hate it)—so that men may call me. . . . It is this dolorous but disjointed response which elicits Venus's smile, a response we recognize when we encounter her again in the second dream vision. Here, however, the poet seems to draw back from the implications of the goddess's smile.
- 2404 This is the first time Venus speaks in the work; she will not speak again until the second dream vision, where she once again addresses the narrator as *frend* (5113 and 5173).
- 2412 The pronoun, necessary for the impersonal construction, is omitted.
- 2419 There is no way of telling whether the envoy is also spoken to Venus or whether it acts as a summary statement of the whole ballade. If this ballade suggested to the poet the narrator's encounter with Venus in the second dream vision, it is interesting that "no care," the name of the narrator's future retreat, is mentioned in the next ballade (2430).
- 2420 *fer myswent*: S&D gloss "for fear of going astray." The manuscript spelling of "fear" is usually *fere* (the only exception is 5090). I would take *myswent* as a *ppl* used adjectively and read "completely lost" (i.e., having gone far astray): "completely lost, feeling my way with my staff."
- 2421 MED gives no examples of a reflexive construction with *cloth* in this sense.
- 2425 This ballade involves a play on physical and mental pain and further develops the physiology of the heart that Charles returns to again and again. Here Dr. No Care replaces Dr. Hope of the (lost) opening allegory (see Introduction, "Argument of the Poem"). Charles was very interested in medicine and deals with the healing process at some length in this work (cf. e.g., B 82, R 103; see Champion, *La Librairie*, 1–lii). The second stanza of this poem sounds very much like an actual encounter between doctor and patient. (For a manuscript illustration of the bedridden lover from Bernier de Chartres, *La vraie médecine d'amour*, see Wack, 73; for the "surgical" removal of the heart from such a lover, *King René's Book of Love*, fol. 2, reproduced in Wack, 95.)
- 2428 *hertily*: in 3 and 355 the two-syllable spelling is correct. Here it should

have been the more common three-syllable spelling.

2438 The addition of *thou* before *kepe* improves both sense and meter.

2442–43 *Beware* governs the whole stanza.

at an eye: the phrase is Fr but was introduced well before Charles's time (Prins, 65). Cf. 3141.

2445 Although the relation of *Yowthe* to the narrator is put in the past tense, it is clearly the very recent past.

2446 It is the eyes that set the heart on fire.

2455–62 S&D cite parallels to the opening in *SqT* 671 and *F&L* 1–2. Hammond also cites Lyd *TB* 1.626 and terms "day of Seynt Valentyne" an accusative of specification, "on the day" (*English Verse*, 473).

If Charles read *PF*, his divergences from his model are more interesting than are his borrowings (see Introduction, "Sources and Influences: Chaucer"). See also Gower, *CB*, Ballade 35.

Fr: Le beau souleil, le jour saint Valentin
Qui apportoit sa chandelle alumee,
N'a pas long temps, entra un bien matin
Priveement en ma chambre fermee.

2458 soft: Charles clearly chose the word for the rhyme and not the meaning, as it does not chime with the refrain (cf. *CA* 4.3019–20).

2463 parten there bottyne: *bottyne* is "what boots one," i.e., relief, cure, weal—in this case, their mates. S&D gloss "divide" their "booty." The birds cannot "divide" (or "share," MED) their mates; they must "choose" or "assign" them (given the necessity of discussion in 2465–66, perhaps the latter is more correct).

The Fr is less cryptic but more abstract: "pour partir leur butin / Des biens d'Amours" (cf. Rondeau CCLIV). Poirion cites a close parallel from *Les Cent Ballades* and glosses "profit, récolte," 149 (*Le Lexique*, s.v. butin).

2465 me neye biside: cf. MED sv. neie 3(a): ~ *ajoinaunt*, closely adjoining. *Myn* should have been corrected to *Me* when *neye* was corrected.

pletid ther latyne: in ME *latyne* "Latin" had become conflated with *leden* (from OE *le(o)den*), which was used of both "Latin" and "language"—in this case bird language. Poirion glosses "*langue ésotérique, jargon*" (*Le Lexique*, s.v. latin). Chaucer's birds simply make a huge *noyse* (*PF* 312). Cf. *Piers Plowman* B.12.253, 262; *SqT* 436–37, 478.

2467 Cf. *PF* 670 and Grandson's "Le Songe Saint Valentin": "Bec et bec, masles et femelles, / Ilz se embrassoient dez elles / Et alignoyent leur plumettez" (Piaget, 310, lines 47–49).

2468 dresse: they are pleading their case before Nature, though she does not actually appear in the ballade.

Fr: Tous les oyseaulx, qui parlans leur latin,
Croyent fort, demandans la livree
Que Nature leur avoit ordonnee:
C'estoit d'un per, comme chascun choisy.

2481 S&D suggest that *this comfort* is an error for *discomfort*; Hammond takes *this comfort sole* as "without this comfort" (*English Verse* 473, 19.27). If *this*

is not an error for, say, *out* ("Whereas, without comfort, I lie here alone"), it can only refer to the lover's weary acknowledgement that at least others are successful in love.

Fr: de Confort desgarny.

2483 This ballade is a good example of a lyric which begins by paralleling its Fr counterpart, then diverges entirely in the third stanza (the Fr, which lacks an envoy, is the last in the series, followed in the MS by *Songe en complainte*—the vision of Age). Though written in octosyllables, a frequent choice of the poet when he composes in Fr, he has not reproduced the meter of the Fr in this case; the Fr ballade is written in five-syllable lines (and has no envoy).

playne: cf. Alford, s.v. pleinen: to make a legal complaint or accusation.

2487 S&D's reading (*forlighly*, "very easily") is also possible.

2491 weele: perhaps the poet intends a play on "weal" and "will" (cf. 2873).

2492-93 Thinking of it is bad enough; desiring it is worse. Steele reads: *vanth*, i.e., *wantith*, altered to *rath*, perhaps suggested by a similar phrase in 4376 ("to suche as wanten brayne"). The *v* is of a different form from those of the main scribe, however, and it is not clear that the *r* is written over the *v* rather than vice versa. Both the *v* and the tittle are written in (light greyish) plummet. It seems more reasonable that a later hand has altered *rath* to *vanth*, that is, "wantith" (in part because the clause lacks a verb). *Hath* would be the logical candidate for a verb, giving something like "Who thinks *that* has a rash mind."

Fr: C'est fait follement

D'ainsy desirer.

2507-8 *pechere*: (trisyllabic; rhyme: *volunte*) Because the marginal correction to *pevechere* makes no sense to me (and does not fit the line), I have relegated it to the notes. Following S&D's line of thought, MED gives "?fishpond" (S&D: "fishing ground, catch of fish"), a reading which seems rather too improbable even for Charles. The word probably represents either some form of OF *pechié*, "sin, fault, wrongful action" (a word he uses in R CCCLXI, as well as *pecheresse* in B CI) or (a noun form) of (*em*)*pechen*, "hinder the freedom of, interfere with" (cf. OF *empeechier*, "interference, obstruction"). Charles uses the word in this sense in B XL (see Poirion, *Le Lexique*, s.v. *empeschier*). Restraining one's lady, or in fact interfering with her freedom in any way, is indeed a serious sin.

Fr: A rebours trouver

Tout leur pensement.

2512-13 Pity here is masculine. Pity's weal (i.e., what he would prefer) is sleep: "the lady must awaken Pity, out of kindness [for the lover]"

2515 Full of wrenching sorrow, this ballade never mentions its cause.

2518 This would result in the death of both. The heart is the executive, served by the lover.

2519 S&D rightly suggest that the passage would make better sense if *y* (2519) were corrected to *thou*.

2521 *almes*: not recorded as a verb (cf. OF *almosner*), but his use of the word

- in 906 shows that he knew how to use it "correctly." This is the only instance in this work of an octosyllabic refrain in a decasyllabic ballade.
- 2522-39 "Mixing" Furies and Fates, Charles first calls on Tisiphone (2522), perhaps an echo of Chaucer's opening of the *Troilus*. That "cruwel Furie, sorwyng evere yn peyne" helps Chaucer's narrator to write "thise woful vers" (6-11). In calling on the three Fates, the poet reverses the usual order, calling first on Atropos, who cuts the thread of life, shifting the blame then to Lachesis, who measures it out too long, and closing with Clotho the spinner, who gives too much of it to Lachesis in the first place. (Chaucer does not call upon *Atropos* until 4.1208 and 1546 or upon *Lachesis* until 5.7).
- 2527 *strecche*: MED cites the word but gives no useable gloss (2d: extend, give, increase, direct). He is not asking that his sorrow be in any way increased, but that the heart measure his sorrow against that of Tisiphone, "the Goddes of Turment," and, recognizing that it is a crushing burden, release the narrator from life. The use of *strecche* is forced, probably because of the poet's need for a rhyme.
- 2529-31 *sorowe/borowe*: one of the poet's rare feminine rhymes. Cf. 5858; *BD* 597; *Lamentations* 1:12.
- 2534 *at*: the scribe wrote *as*, perhaps because the two adjoining words end in *s*.
- 2538 The scribe wrote *hit* instead of *hir*.
- 2540 This narrative section includes the first dream vision (of Age) and narrates the (ex-)lover's withdrawal from Love's service. In my view, this marks the end of the first of the three major parts of the work (made up of the opening allegory and the first ballade sequence). For a translation of the Fr version of this vision, see Goodrich, *Biography*, 218-21.
- 2553 *writhid*: literally "twisted, wrung, contorted," but here it is better translated "struggled" or "wrestled."
- 2556 *resonyd*: MED cites this line and glosses "address," but the word here and in 2266 more likely means "rebuke" or "call to account" (see Alford, s.v. *aresounen*; Greimas, s.v. *araisnier* 4).
- 2558-61 This passage refers to the action of the opening poem, now lost (see Introduction, "Argument of the Poem"). In the Fr counterpart of the opening allegory, *Age* (as he explains again in lines 2568ff.) brings a letter to *Enfance* (*Childhode*) from *Dame Nature* announcing that it is time that the narrator be given into the care of *Dame Jennesse* (*Youthe*):
- En cest estat, par un temps me nourry;
Et après ce, quant je fu enforçy,
Ung messagier, qui Age s'appela,
Une lettre de creance bailla
A Enfance, de par Dame Nature,
Et si lui dist que plus la nourriture
De moy n'auroit et que Dame Jennesse
Me nourriroit et seroit ma maistresse.
Ainsi du tout Enfance delaissay
Et avecques Jennesse m'en alay. (11-20)

This passage may be intended to evoke the experience of Boethius, as well: "I byholde my norcyce, Philosophie, in whoos hous I hadde conversed and hauntyd fro my youthe" (*Bo*, 1.pr.3.5-7). On the role of Age as a facilitator rather than a specific period of life, see Introduction, "Argument of the Poem." Old age is named *Elde*. For a more absolute and realistic confrontation with age, see Charles's final rondeau (CCCCXXXV).

The convention of the debate of Love and *Elde* governs this passage (see Burrow, "Portrayal of Amans"), but Charles has no intention of letting the tradition of an aged lover who leaves Love's service make the courting of a second lady impossible. The God of Love attempts to induce the lover to take a new lady, as does Venus later. Neither would do so if the lover were unfit to serve them on account of his age.

The figure of Age here resembles Gower's Venus in discoursing on the relation of love to age near the end of the *Confessio Amantis*. (For an interpretation of Venus's actions that contrasts nicely with those of Charles's goddess and resembles those of Age, see Lynch, 187-89.) Unlike Gower's Venus, however, he does not announce that the narrator has become old, but only that *Elde* "caste with thee [the lover] to aqueynt" (2571, see 2576).

2561-63 Cf. *BD* 797-802.

2564-65 Fr: Or est ainsi que Raison, qui sus tous

Doit gouverner, a fait tresgrant complainte.

2566 MS: Vnto Nature on thee and on thi maystres. Omission of the second *on* (perhaps dittography) improves the meter.

2569 As in *Piers Plowman*, *Elde*, the mother of infirmity, is in the service of - Nature.

2573 what: Daunt explains that the vowel is lengthened by metrical stress (152).

2575 The suggestion of Age that it is possible to "depart . . . from loue algate," reinforced in 2602 and 2612, seems in light of later events not to be true: after a single roundel that celebrates the narrator's withdrawal from love, Roundel 2 begins "Now holde him silf from loue, let se þat may" (3152), and Venus concludes her debate with the narrator with "where ye cast away from loue withdrawe, / . . . y trowe yowre labour vaylith not" (4960-61). See 2663-75n.

2575-79 The lover may withdraw from Love's service because his lady has died. He has not yet been captured by "Louys foo," *Elde*; he must escape before that happens. Cf. 2590-91, and *MT* 3230: "For youthe and elde is often at debaat." On the phrase *falle at . . . debate* see Prins, 132. as this: see 1786n.

2583 *Elde* here stands for the (generalized) lover. Clanvowe, 168-69: "For loving is in yonge folke but rage, / And in olde hit is a grete dotage . . ." (see Scattergood). Cf. Hoccleve, *Lepistre de Cupide*, st. 33, lines 225-31. *Dotage* involves both "infatuation" and (ModE) "dotage" (see 2587n).

2584-85 yond drye image: (cf. *Elde* in *Rom* 359-66). The statement is difficult to render literally, though the meaning is clear. Cf. *MerchT* 1463; *Sir Orfeo* 508.

Fr: Chascun s'en rit, disant: Dieu quelle joye!

Ce foul vieillard veult devenir enfant! [Champion's punctuation].

- 2587 as a colt to rage: MED gives "play, romp, frolic," but the expression has strong sexual overtones. Chaucer's Alisoun is "wynsynge . . . as is a joly colt" (*MilT* 3263), and his Wife of Bath "hadde alwey a coltes tooth" (*WBT* 602). See OED, s.v. colt, and cf. *Scogan* 35; such expressions involving colts are common.
- 2589 siithe: probably a scribal error for *sithe* or *suthe*; the addition of a final *-n(s)* would improve the meter (cf. Revisor A: *sydys*, 3542).
- 2592 displeaunce: this is a clear instance of Charles's use of the word in a very strong sense: *displeaunce* causes death.
- 2597 yelde thee thyn homage: cf. 2655; the vassal first "returns" his homage to his lord and then "takes back" his oath.
Fr: rebrandre l'ommage.
- 2599 Bilevyng: *bi levyng* ("by leaving") would also be possible.
- 2602 depart out mawgre: either *departen* or *without* would improve the meter.
- 2603 Burrow, in discussing the Fr poems, suggests that in his retirement the narrator adopts "a variety of middle-aged roles," including the hosting of the banquet announced in B 84 (*Ages*, 185). The use of the term *myddil age* suggests a progression (Childhood) Youth, Middle Age, Elde (see *Ages*, 71), but 2561–69 suggest that *Yelde* follows directly on *Yowthe* (cf. 2647–49).
- 2608 case: see Alford, s.v. cas.
- 2610–11 graunt thi service: apparently the lover must indicate his desire to serve Love even as he withdraws from it.
Fr: Car de servir estiés desireux
Amours, et tous ceulx de sa seigneurie.
- 2612 ponysshment: Charles apparently wanted a rhyme in *-ment* and stretched a point to get one. MED cites this uniquely as meaning "jurisdiction" (S&D; Fr: "povair").
- 2615 Cf. Machaut, *Remede* 2411–36: ". . . she will be sweet to you when she observes you with the face she has in front, generously promising you sweetness, joy, and happiness . . . [but] if you are observed by the other face, be careful, because Fortune is attacking you with lance at the ready" (Wimsatt and Kibler, 300–302).
- 2617 to ben lent: the phrase seems to mean "to grant."
- 2625 "Plesere" is of course used ironically. S&D suggest that B 80 was already written when the encounter of the narrator with Age was composed, since "no care" is mentioned here. The order of composition was just as likely the reverse (cf. B 70 and the second dream vision); the idea of "no care" here may have suggested the idea of further development. The fact that both poems follow the general order of the Fr, in which the vision precedes the ballade, might support this argument.
- 2626 flet: *fletten*, from ON *flytja*, "forsake" (S&D).
- 2632 dissent: S&D gloss "opposition." Charles may have had the word *disseyt* in mind (which would make better sense but would not fit the rhyme; cf. 2619). MED gives only the verb ("withholding of consent") and OED

- records the meaning "opposite of consent" first in 1651. The fact that the only other use of the word (1236) is also problematic argues perhaps for some confusion on the part of the poet as to its meaning. The Fr diverges from the E at this point.
- 2636 In the MS, the scribe has mistakenly written *EVen*.
- 2639 ynheve: note the rhymes: *apsen trel/pardel/aqueynten me. yn-* is one of the prefixes Charles uses productively, along with *en-* and *for-*. *Poore* is disyllabic.
- 2647–52 Though Age is male, Elde is female. A writ of attachment is a writ issued for the apprehension of a person, placing him under the control of a court of law (see Alford, s.v. *attachen*).
- 2649 in yowthe: the narrator is still in the "custody" of Youth, i.e., he has not passed out of the age governed by Venus.
- 2655–56 lost: S&D suggest that the scribe misread *left* as *lest*, and then wrote *lost* (citing the Fr "laissé," but the Fr phrase "laissé tout office" corresponds to "yelde up . . . myn office"). Cf. OED, s.v. *homage sb.* 1: "to resign *homage*, formally to renounce allegiance." Cf. 2597.
Fr: C'est pour le mieulx, s'avant je me pourvoy,
Et trouveray Vieillesse plus propice,
Quant congnoistra qu'ay laissé tout office
Pour la suir. . . .
- 2663–75 This wise advice to himself accords with that of Age, but, just as later evidence suggests that it is *not* so easy to withdraw from love, so the eyes are specifically named as the agency by which the lover is to be frustrated in his wish for a peaceful retirement (3053–66). Cf. *CA* 8.2085–2236.
- 2669 slepy rest: a comment on the nature of No Care.
- 2671 at large: the phrase, though Fr (*au large*), was not introduced by Charles (Prins, 67; Mustanoja, 365).
- 2674 to his bihoue: the scribe has omitted *to* (for the correct form, see 1148, 4386).
- 2675 make: to take as mate, perhaps with a pun on make (i.e., create, invent). Inasmuch as *plesauce* is usually stressed on the second syllable in these poems, this must be a Lydgate line.
- 2676 yn myn owen herte: an unusual use of *herte* in these poems (cf. 2613, 2801).
- 2684–86 A difficult construction.
Fr: Mais en ce temps, ne congnoissoye pas
La grant douleur qu'il couvient que soustiengne
Un povre cueur pris es amoureux las.
- 2693 bill: "formal petition"; see Alford, s.v. *bill*.
- 2695 at the lest: MED glosses "at the least" *adj*; surely S&D are correct in seeing it as a noun: "at last."
- 2696 Royal (high court) parliaments were sometimes held at festive occasions (though this was increasingly rare), when all the appropriate subjects of the realm were gathered in one place, e.g., for a royal wedding, a feast day such as Christmas, etc. It is not inappropriate therefore to refer to a parliament's being convened when the ruler "next holdith fest."
- 2701 S&D suggest the removal of *my* to improve the meter.

2704 Steele attempted to correct the sense of the line with his reading of “reklamer” (appeal, petition) in the outer margin. Apparently not understanding the word (or some version of it), the scribe changed it to “fayre speche,” according to S&D (but whoever corrected the line neglected to erase “fayre” along with “speche”), giving: “Thus may y lo rekewre bi reklamer.” The word “rekewre” was then “crossed through in order to get a metrical line,” but the result (“Thus may y lo bi reklamer”) makes no sense. MED has taken cognizance of Steele’s reconstruction but presented it “Thus may y, lo, bi fayre reklamer. . . .”

Unfortunately, the word in the margin is “rekkwer,” which destroys this attractive argument. “Rekkwer” was intended to replace “speche” (which does not rhyme) and “rekewre” was crossed out either in error or because the poet was looking for a word less like the rhyme word (though, given Charles’s love of word play, the former seems more likely). It is not certain whether the marginal correction was the work of either A or B. The word has quasi-legal connotations in English; Poirion glosses *requerir* both “demander avec insistance” and “en appeler en justice” (*Le Lexique*).

Fr: Et requerray, par treshumble priere

Qu’il me quitte de tous les couvenans

Que je luy fis. . . .

2708 For this construction, see 177–78n.

2710 The Fr version would suggest that *the* may be an error for *for* (“Pour plus seurte d’estre son serviteur”), but, as the line differs significantly in E, it is also possible that the scribe has written *sewrete* for *sewrely*.

2716–2813 Three lines are left blank before the address (2716–17) and two lines after. Charles handles the syntactical difficulties of versifying a pseudo-legal document (complicated by his use of short lines requiring frequent rhymes) easily. “La syntaxe, à base de subjonctifs et d’impératifs, donne une très grande cohésion à ce petit poème, dans le mouvement pressant de la requête,” writes Poirion of its Fr counterpart (*Le Poète*, 423). The difficulty of versifying such legal language should not, however, be underestimated (see Hall, *Formula Book*, pt. 1, no. 102: privy seal letter, 1482). As always, the document is phrased in the proper way. Camargo refers to his “studiously imitating dictaminal style” (101).

2719 A number of the short lines in this document are apparently headless: 2725, 2752, 2776, 2809; in Fr Charles uses four trisyllabic lines per verse paragraph.

2722 That suget ly: this may be a plural used for a singular for the sake of the rhyme, a makeshift he employs in 2777 and elsewhere. It is also possible to take the phrase as “Of them that lie,” i.e., most unworthy of all your subjects. The humility he expresses is typical of the narrator and a *topos* germane to this kind of literature, but it is also appropriate form for a document such as a petition.

2743–65 This verse paragraph outlines the offence committed against the petitioner. Following that (2754–65), he reaffirms his vow of loyalty to his lord but then asks for release from it.

- 2745 Apparently octosyllabic, as are 2757, 2780, 2790, 2793 and 2795–96.
- 2753 The who . . . hit: a split relative pronoun.
- 2765 him silf to bow: cf. OED, s.v. bow II8c.
- 2766–72 The introductory clause runs to the middle of 2772; *he* is the subject. *Desert* might be taken either as a ppl or as a noun. The vassal asks to have his oath returned to him, an interesting extension of the usual feudal reciprocity. Cf. 2597.
- wothe: Joseph Wright includes *woth* as a dialectal form and labels Somerset. The fact that it is a revision of *worke* may indicate that the scribe did not recognize the form.
- Fr: En lui quittant son serment.
- 2775 sat him nere than euyr sat him shert: see OED, s.v. shirt 1c: a type of what is nearest to one's person. "[the matter] touched him as nere as his shert," 1548 Hall.
- 2777 to hem þat for hit cry: S&D suggest that *cry* is a plural used for the singular, for the sake of rhyme, but the plea might also be couched in more general terms: grant mercy to those who plead for it, i.e., the lover.
- 2778–81 On writing vs. dictation to a secretary and the circulation of poems in Machaut's day, see Williams, 434–39; see also Alford, s.v. lettre.
- 2786 See Alford, s.v. dischargen I.
- 2787 For this use of *for*, see OED, s.v. for VI.19.
- 2790 On this use of *seid*, see Mustanoja, 176–77.
- 2794 MED cites *lay* under *lien* 10c, "depend on"; it is rather a form of *leien*, "record."
- 2807 The line is incomplete.
- 2813 The petition has no closing (place, date, signature).
- 2814–15 See 2696n. Here the celebration which provides the occasion for the parliament is called the "fest of Loue." Charles is blending a kind of historical realism with literary fantasy. On this use of *gan*, see Mustanoja, 610–15, esp. 613. This is the first of a series of seven narrative ballades without envoys that detail the actual withdrawal from Love's service and retirement to the castle of No Care.
- 2816 I only: either "I presented it myself" or "I presented the only request that was presented."
- 2830 The God of Love's rhetoric is reminiscent of that of Pandarus in *T&C* 4.400–427.
- 2833 aply: the meaning "devote" usu. requires a reflexive pronoun, but Charles occasionally omits the pronoun, perhaps for metrical reasons.
- 2838–2959 The narrator's withdrawal may be modelled loosely on Oton de Grandson's "Complainte de Saint Valentine," where the bereaved lover protests to the saint and Amours:
- Helas! sire, pardonnez moy,
Et me laissez souffrir ma paine.
Je ne quier qu'estre en ung recoy
Pour regrecter ma souveraine,
De qui ma plaisance mondaine

M'estoit venue entierement,
 Dont jamaiz liesse certaine
 Ne puis avoir aucunement. (lines 129–36)

The scribe usually matches spellings and rhymes, but in this case he writes *lade* instead of *lady*, probably under the influence of the previous line (see Introduction, "Versification").

In B 76 through B 81 the scribe has not made room for a two-line initial at the beginning of each poem, another indication that these "narrative ballades" form a group and differ from all the other ballades in the work.

2845 *ferre*: the spelling with *-rre*, usually reserved for the comparative, is used here and elsewhere by this scribe for the positive form.

2870 *nor*: an error for *ner* (*ne wer*) or perhaps *nis*.

2880 *court of parlement*: high court of parliament is a formal phrase which emphasizes the gravity of the case being heard, in this case, before the God of Love sitting as king.

2881 *quytaunce*: see Alford, s.v. *aquitaunce*.

2884 *content*: the verb ought to be reflexive, and the line is lacking a syllable.

2886 *Fr*: Tantost Amour, en grant arroy,
 Fist assembler son Parlement.

2887 *had*: *hath* written in error.

2888 *declarid*: see Alford, s.v. *declaren*.

2890 *ther graunt vnto hit went*: perhaps "was given" (from *go*) or "turned" (from *wend*).

2898 *gouernement*: his usual form is *governaunce*; the suffix was chosen to suit the rhyme (see Introduction, "Versification").

2902 Perhaps octosyllabic.

2904 *in an exstreme*: not recorded in MED, but see Alford, s.v. *in extremis*.

2909 In the *Fr* version the counterpart of this ballade is followed by a poem of forty-four lines entitled "Copie de la quittance dessus dicte," which does not have an *E* version (though it is referred to in 2891). It is dated "Feste des Mors" (All Souls' Day) "mil quatre cent trente et sept" (1437), "ou chastel de Plaisant Recept." For an example of an acquittance of certain monies due, issued by Edward III (in Anglo-Norman), see Hall, *Formula Book*, pt. I, no. 141.

2912 *hit*: if it is not an error for *yit*, it must be taken to anticipate 2915–17 (S&D).

2913 *regally*: MED glosses "royal court," citing this line, but in light of the following line Charles's usual sense of "highness," "majesty" is perhaps better.

2921 *hardily*: disyllabic (cf. 4975).

2923 A negative would seem to be missing in this line, but the meter (which is fine) and the line that follows indicate otherwise.

2928 as a man *forravishid* in a traunce: see Wack, 64–65, 151–52.

2940 Presumably the place where *Jennesse* first appears to him in his *chambre* on Valentine's Day to invite him to make the acquaintance of the God of Love (in the lost opening allegory).

2945–46 We are probably meant to imagine the "Hard Road of Sorrow."

Fr: A Confort dis: "Jusqu'a demain
 Ne me laissez, car je pourroye
 Me forvoier, pour tout certain,
 Par desplaisir, vers la saussoye [lieu planté de saules—Champion]
 Ou est Vieillesse rabat joye."

2947 The tense changes abruptly from past to present.

2950 It is possible that *at* is an error for *that*, but, inasmuch as the line is short a syllable, I have chosen to add *that*.

2953 This porter (*Tyme Apast*) parallels that of the manor of the God of Love (*Compaignie*) in the opening allegory (see Introduction, "Argument of the Poem").

2956 *paynt my wordis*: the reference is to the colors of rhetoric (as it is in 4899). For a concise discussion of the "colors" see Hammond, *English Verse*, 452–53.

2957 The refrain line has been erased. The intended sense (if, indeed, Charles himself did not have the line erased) was probably something like: "Welcome (I cannot speak grandiloquently) to the Castle which is called No Care." In other words, simply, Welcome. I have numbered the phantom line to maintain the same line numbering as S&D. The Castle of No Care replaces the Castle of Humble Desire from which the opening patent was issued (54).

2959 *Tyme Apast*: also called *Passid Tyme* (2979 and 3046). Charles seems to play on the name of the constable of the castle. The exact meaning of the term is important in determining the nature of and motive behind the narrator's activities while in retirement. As *Tyme Apast* he is a figure from the lover's childhood, the period preceding youth (2939–40), i.e., the past. As *Passid Tyme* he represents diversion, pastime (also a character familiar to children and a proper keeper of No Care, but even more appropriately the usual cure for lovesickness). In 3046 the second of the two meanings is the only possible one. MED gives no meaning "pastime" (OED quotes Caxton as its earliest witness). In the Fr version of the poem *Passé Temps* is the only name used.

2960 The epithet *Wanton* is meant to be a bit of gentle teasing ("with glad countenance"), perhaps accompanied by some pretended sternness on the part of a former authority figure. OED first records the word as a form of address "sometimes used as a term of endearment" in the sixteenth century (s.v. *wanton adj* B2 1589 Greene: "Wepe not my wanton!"). S&D's characterization of *Tyme Apast* is unnecessarily severe. He is a man of few words and some authority who speaks in formal, self-deprecating terms. The narrator reports to the God of Love that *Tyme Apast* "resceyvid me in right goodly manere" (3003).

2969 *quytaunce*: see 2909n.

2970 *in substaunce*: perhaps in this case the phrase refers to the document itself (see 546n).

2971–73 Fr: Aussi de ce me remercie

Que je vouloie demourer

Avecques lui toute ma vie.

2974 Fr: Le lendemain, lettres foison.

2975 *avaunce*: an odd use (perhaps influenced by Fr), for the rhyme; it means simply *go*. It is Comfort who wishes to leave rather than, as in the Fr, the lover who declares no further need of him.

2976–77 In which: refers to the letters the narrator has written, which are not specifically mentioned.

made recommendacioun of his goodnes: this is not so un-English a phrase as S&D make out; see MED, s.v. *maken* 12a/b.

2978 *prance*: “go”; if the word is not chosen simply for the rhyme, it may indicate the rider’s eagerness for the return journey.

2981 The refrain does not fit well syntactically with the verse here; “And” seems to be superfluous, unless we are to read “and (to report) how I was to bide there with him until the hour I died,” or “and that I would abide there. . . .”

2984 The narrator writes to the God of Love to apprise him of his safe journey and fair welcome and to apologize for his unseemly behavior at his leave-taking. The epistle, which rhymes in couplets, is laid out in eight-line stanzas in the MS. Though this MS resembles Charles’s autograph MS in many details of layout, the poem corresponding to this one is written continuously.

2987 *recomaunde*: the elliptical construction omits the reflexive pronoun *me* (as well as *to*), perhaps felt to be unnecessary because it anticipates “recomaunde . . . me” in the following line.

2992 Fr: Et si bonnes comme je le desire.

3011 I have emended to *withouten* to fit both the line length and the stress pattern.

3022 “The practice of merely outlining one’s message and leaving the bearer to fill in the details is . . . typical of medieval correspondence” (Camargo, 104).

3037 Octosyllabic.

3038 The narrator asks God Almighty to send the God of Love honor and long life.

to endure: as it does not parallel an earlier verb, “long life to live” would seem to mean no more than “long life.”

3040–43 It is difficult to say whether the division into stanzas is scribal or authorial (though the number of enjambed stanzas implies that it is scribal), but the thought beginning in 3036 is not complete until line 3041, and lines 3042–43 are part of the “signature” completed in 3044–45.

3042 The details of dating are more exact in the Fr versions of these poems than in the E (another reason to think them prior). The *quittance*, which does not exist in an E version, is dated 1437 (see 2909n).

The Fr letter to the God of Love gives not only the date, but the time of day:

Eschrift ce jour troiesme, vers le soir,
En novembre, ou lieu de Nonchaloir.

Le bien vostre, Charles, duc d'Orlians,

Qui jadis fut l'un de voz vrais servans. (lines 547–50, 118)

yove: see 53n. The name of the sender is often followed by a word or phrase identifying his position or relation to the recipient, as in 3045. On the reason for dating the letter November, see Stokes and Scattergood.

This passage has given rise to various misguided autobiographical speculations. Arguing from the dated French version, some have assumed that Charles was about forty-three when he wrote this section or that we should see the narrator as about forty-three years old. Especially given the fact that we do not know when the E version of the Vision of Age was written (and that the French version makes no mention of middle age), such reasoning is purely speculative. On the dangers of reading such biographical details from the life of a poet's persona, see Huot on Froissart as aging poet (*From Song to Book*, 317).

3045 servaunce: either the scribe has matched the spelling with the rhyme word "Orlyauunce" or Charles had the Fr form in mind ("vos vrais servans"), or both.

3046 St prints the heading "The Book of Jubilee: A Banquet of Song and Dance" at the beginning of the next ballade (B 83), but the layout of the text suggests that the scribe saw this ballade (B 82) as the first of a group of three (this ballade begins with the customary two-line initial letter, but B 83 and 84, like the "narrative ballades" that preceded this one, do not). The three ballades in turn announce the lover's "cure," the celebration of his *Iewbile*, and the menu at the planned *fest*.

Passid Tyme: the context implies that Charles meant "pastime" (see 2959n). Diversion is a standard remedy for lovesickness, but in this case the lover's "cure" is exceedingly temporary. At this point the order of the poems once again diverges from that of the Fr, where the counterpart of B 82 follows that of 83. B 84 has no Fr counterpart, and its composition may have occasioned the reordering.

3053 Cf. B 71.

3057 This line is typical of Charles's occasionally odd word order.

3061–63 The eyes apparently know how to act in a disciplined manner (3061–62), but the narrator foolishly refuses to rein them in.

y lete them renne vpon the playne: i.e., the lover does not disguise the fact that he is looking. The implied metaphor may be an oblique reference to the horse and rider imagery common in debates between the body and soul (see Vogel, 59). The eyes are controlling the narrator rather than the narrator, the eyes. Cf. the relation of the lover to his heart in B 8.

Fr: Mes yeulx tense, main et soir,

Mais ilz sont si treshastis,

Et trop plains de leur vouloir

Au fort, je les metz au pis [je ne crains rien, quoi qu'ils fassent—

Poirion, *Le Lexique*, s.v. pis],

Facent selon leur advis.

Note the play on *playne/plains*.

3065 more *lesse*: ? even less; not English, however it is construed.

3071–3109 It is difficult to know how to scan the opening line. Presumably the line is octosyllabic, as is its Fr counterpart (*baladis* is probably disyllabic; perhaps the second foot is inverted). There are problems, too, in the scansion of the lines that rhyme with this one. S&D resort to suggestions of emendations in 3073 and 3093 (and guess at a longer original word underlying the correction in 3082) to improve the meter, assuming, apparently, that the stress falls on the penultimate syllable. Judging from the high degree of regularity in Charles's verse and the apparently usual alteration of stresses in the rest of the line in each of these instances, it would seem that (odd as it sounds) the stress is, in each case, on the final syllable, even though the final two syllables rhyme (in the Fr the inflectional ending constitutes a syllable: *complaintes*, *estaintes*, etc.). This is very unusual in Charles's E verse and in his Fr. (That the poet had some difficulty with the poem is evidenced by correction in the rhymes of 3082 and 3084.)

The poem is unusually obscure. It is clear, however, that the narrator first envisions his retirement from love as simply an absence of the pain he feels, i.e., no care (B 71 and 82), but soon discovers that he is expected to continue writing (or "performing") love lyrics. In the following ballade he agrees to do so, primarily in order to please his "guests" (his readers).

On the sentiment of this ballade, cf. Chartier, lines 17–20 (*LBD* 45–52).

3076–81 Fr: *Essaier vueil se je sauroye*

Rimer, ainsi que je souloye.

Au meins j'en feray mon pouvoir,

Combien que je congnois et sçay

Que mon langage trouveray

Tout enroillié de Nonchaloir.

The stanzas of this ballade are longer than usual, and the penultimate line might therefore be taken as the first of a two-line refrain, though it varies from stanza to stanza. The pair *rollid/enroillié* ("rusted") from the E and Fr refrains is especially amusing (see Introduction, "Relation of the English Poems to Their French Counterparts"). The Fr refrain is only one line long. On the idea of despair as an inhibitor of composition, see Kelly, *Medieval Imagination*, 253–55.

3082 *disyoentis*: ?"are dislocated." This is the only place in the manuscript where both revisors emend the same word—a sure sign of some difficulty in the original. Revisor B's apparent [*dis*]antys makes little sense, but perhaps he intended [*dis*]yantys (in fact another form of A's revision). The correction of A to *disyoentis* does not reflect the meaning of the Fr version (*sont estaintes*, "are extinguished"), though it makes reasonably good sense. It is probably a form of "disjoin," for which MED gives "dislocated"; "disjointed," of course, comes to mean "incoherent" (of language) at a later date. On the pronunciation of *disyoentis*, see Daunt, 137.

The fact, however, that both choose not to separate the final two

letters of the word indicates that this is probably not to be read as a participle plus auxiliary, despite the lack of agreement in number with *wordis*. (St treats *detaynt* and *depaynt* as separable from *is*; Daunt prints only the latter as two words [137].) The poet elsewhere uses singular for plural and vice versa to suit his need for rhymes.

3083 forsotid in foly: "besotted"; cf. *LBD* 325–26: "Ladies be nat . . . so sotted of foly."

3087 lust: *must* would make better sense (or perhaps *ye* should be *y*, cf. 3091).

3088 in rage yowthe so full of play: the meaning of this phrase may be less violent than the image the MED definition of *rage* (wanton, wild, riotous) conjures up, as the word *play* suggests. As in the narrator's encounter with the constable of the Castle of No Care, where the poet uses *wanton* as a mild, affectionate form of address, here the E is mild and more or less equivalent to the Fr line in tone: "jeune, nouvel et plain de joye."

3089 square: MED, following S&D, glosses "grumble." In this context it means "miswrite" (or "misspeak"); he cannot express himself as he wishes.

3093–96 My paraphrase here should be taken as no more than a suggestion. Having wrestled with these lines repeatedly, I still am not confident of their meaning. S&D divide MS *settis* (3094) and print *sett is*. Comparison with the Fr causes as many problems as it solves:

Amoureux ont parolles peintes
Et langage frois et joly;
Plaisance dont ilz sont accointes
Parle pour eulx; en ce party
- J'ay esté, or n'est plus ainsi.

It may be, rather, that Pleasure teaches the lovers to plead their cases effectively.

fresshly: the word seems to entail two meanings here: "depaynt" suggests the colors of rhetoric, hence the paraphrase "brightly." The word also carries the meaning "in a lively or vigorous manner" (that is, lovers have nimble tongues) to contrast with the ex-lover's tongue, which "turns away" from love talk. *Depaynt is* would appear to be the only instance in this rhyme set of participle plus auxiliary. Cf. *HF* 245–47.

3104 or y day: The unfortunate phrase is used simply as a filler (though he does not expect to celebrate another jubilee in his lifetime).

The envoy of the corresponding Fr poem differs radically:
Mon jubilé faire devroye,
Mais on diroit que me rendroye
Sans coup ferir, car Bon Espoir
M'a dit que renouvelleray;
Pour ce, mon cueur fourbir feray
Tout enroillié de Nonchaloir!

Here the poet undergoes a "fountain of youth" experience and immediately acts like a young lover again (this is followed by the Fr version of B 82). S&D's title for the central narrative section ("Love's Renewal") is bor-

rowed from the Fr *renouveleray*. The idea of a *jubilé* is completely undeveloped in the Fr poems. For a discussion of the idea of a jubilee, see Introduction, "Authorship."

- 3109 The regular correspondence between the Fr and E works effectively ends here. Though the first fifty-two Fr chansons run parallel to the E roundels, there is no evidence that Charles connected them in any way with his "livre de pensée," which Champion ends with the letter the narrator sends back to the God of Love from the Castle of No Care.
- 3110 The opening word, "but," emphasizes the close relation of this poem to the previous one, as does the lack of a two-line capital (also in 3071). The emphasis is on the delicacy of the food offered, both in size ("lyte") and in quality ("deynte"). The contrast between the ease of this poem and the tortured syntax of the previous one speaks volumes about the relative difficulty of "translation" and "free" composition.
- grose mete: from the Fr (*grosse viande*), but Charles did not introduce the phrase into E (Prins, 143-44).
- 3113 For the first time, the narrator speaks directly to his readers or listeners, who are his guests at the banquet to follow. Stevens writes of late medieval poets speaking to their "gallery of lovers" (158); here Charles does so explicitly. The audience addressed is the same as the "louers" whom the narrator is attempting to induce to pray for his soul in 3105; no longer a lover, he will attempt to sing of love anyway for the benefit of his audience of lovers (and ultimately for himself). This abrupt shift in relationship between the narrator and his audience (who up till now have "overheard" the events of his love affair) from an indirect to a direct one is only one of the striking techniques the poet uses to draw us into his world.
- 3115 The banquet idea is carried over the roundel sequence to the verses that follow (4319-4486). This use of the metaphor of literature as food is perhaps best known from Dante's *Convivio*, where in the first chapter he offers his guests (his audience) a banquet: "the food for this banquet will be served as fourteen courses, that is, as fourteen canzoni, treating of both love and virtue" (*The Banquet*, 1.1.14; see 1.10.1). Charles's banquet, or *fest*, is provided solely for the entertainment rather than for the edification of his guests and consists exclusively of poems without commentary (cf. Rondeau CCLXXXIII, where food is love "dedans l'amoureuse cuisine").
- The source for both Charles and Dante is, of course, ultimately biblical. The idea of text as food, with images of chewing, savoring, and digesting, can be found throughout the religious literature of the Middle Ages. The most vivid visual representation of the idea is perhaps to be found in the illustrations of Rev. 10:9-10, for which see Gellrich (16, pl. I; the caption reads simply "John eats the book." Cf. Jer. 15:16: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them. . . ." See also Curtius, "Alimentary Metaphors," 134-36; Marks).
- 3116 for *mysvse*: I have glossed "because (of)," but S&D gloss "against misuse," for which see OED, s.v. for 23c/d.
- 3117 among: Charles seems to have attempted to give the word a different

meaning in each stanza. Though not entirely sure that all are glossed correctly, I have ascribed a different definition to the word each time it occurs.

3118 short song is good in ale: an untraced proverb meaning that short songs allow more time for drinking (Whiting & Whiting cite only this line S471).

3120 The poet probably chose *svetest* because it can easily apply to both food and song. Cures for lovesickness often include prescriptions for "temperate" food; Peter of Spain connects lovesickness and nobility and explains that "the material cause of the disease is an excess of seed produced in those who live in leisure, quiet, and bodily pleasure" (Wack, 89; see Peter of Spain's prescription of *cibum temperatus* in his commentary on the *Viaticum* in Wack, 228-29). The lover, however, indulges himself and his guests in *delikatessen* (what Chaucer's Parson denounces as "to delicaat mete" [*ParsT* 829]).

3126-29 Tilley records: "Lovers live by love as larks live by leeks (Heywood I x, S. C 3v)"; a 1721 citation in the same entry explains it: "a jest upon them that eat little" (L569). The poet thus both emphasizes the extreme daintiness of the fare and invokes the modesty topos, at the same time that he implies that this is a banquet that is not a banquet. It will "feed" no one, least of all the narrator, who will find at the end of the meal that his lovesickness is aggravated, not cured (see R 103 and what follows).

If *lokis* is disyllabic, the line has eleven syllables, but the line that rhymes with it (3128) has ten. Though both the penultimate and the final syllables rhyme, I would suggest (for the reasons given in 3071n) that it is this line which is in error.

3128 The "bok" is the roundel collection with its framing poems, as well as, in a larger sense, the whole work.

3136 so small: this apparently modest remark points out the length of the roundel series (approximately 100 poems) while seeming to belittle the accomplishment. He may also be alluding to the "trifling" size of the individual roundels.

3137 The poet promises to revise his work if it does not please his guests (cf. 3091). The *if* clause parallels that in 3135. For a discussion of the roundel series see Introduction, "The Roundel." The roundels are extremely miscellaneous, and little attempt has been made to organize them coherently. They seem to be set in a kind of fantasy land: the lover gives and receives many kisses, he flirts a good deal, and things seem for the most part to go his way. H. A. Mason reads this ballade as a declaration that all the roundels that follow are occasional poems that Charles had copied "for the entertainment of his friends" (164-65).

3141 The proverbial expression (see S&D and OED, s.v. flea 4b) is from the Fr: "avoir la puce a l'oreille, être inquiet, agité" (Littré, s.v. puce). Fr: "pusse." Cf. Whiting & Whiting, F259, esp. Lyd *Pilg* 9574-78. Johnson says, "One of the meanings of 'avoir la puce á l'oreille' is to suffer mental anguish or torment" (114).

3144 THis: the capital *H* is copied from the opening line.

- 3147 S&D suggest that *that* may have been omitted after *For*.
- 3152–53 Both *holde* and *kepe* may also carry the meaning “defend (against),” “guard.” The relation between this roundel and the previous one resembles the turn between the first stanza of B 82 and the rest of the poem. After he swears that he is cured of love, it becomes immediately obvious that his desires have not even been curbed, let alone extinguished.
- 3163 The line, which has eleven syllables as it stands, has been altered, yet still contains an evident error.
- 3176–77 An inversion of the more usual irregularity, here Charles writes two decasyllabic lines within a lyric written in octosyllables.
- 3182–83 Fr: Il m’est advis, par mon serement,
Que sa pareille n’a en vie.
- 3198 Octosyllabic.
- 3199 Such a proverbial expression, if it is one, is unrecorded.
- 3211 To eueri wight hir prays doth newe repayre: people hear her praised again and again, because each time someone sees her he realizes how gracious she is. The sense of repetition in *repayre* is picked up in *renewith* (3213) and is clarified in 3216 as an oblique reference to the lady as the phoenix.
- 3222 An asseveration followed by an address to the lady. S&D suggest that “since Fr *foi* became E *fay*, it may well have seemed reasonable to Charles that ‘joie’ might be rendered ‘jay’” (on the pronunciation see Daunt, 136).
- 3223 Octosyllabic, as is 3232.
- 3225 *yowre body with long streight sidis tay*: According to the MED, “sides” (“between the shoulder and the thigh”) were commonly described as “longe” (and “smothe,” “white,” or “gent,”), but it records no instances of ladies’ figures being “streight.” This seemingly odd way of describing an ideal of beauty in the late Middle Ages receives a convincing explanation from Margaret Scott in her discussion of “The Gothic Nude” (39–47).
- 3230 Fr: *Combien que parler envieux*
Souventesfois moult fort me blesse.
- 3241 It is he (or his heart) who should not speak.
Fr: *C’est droit que vostre conseil celle.*
- 3250 As: as the catchword confirms, the guide letter should have been *A* rather than *I*. The line is octosyllabic.
Fr: *Ou regard de voz beaulx doulx yeulx.*
- 3251 *refrayne*: MED (following S&D) cites, giving “remove, take away,” though S&D revise to “withhold” in their corrigenda (this line only). Slander rather prevents the lover and the lady from being together. It would be very unusual for Charles to use the same rhyme word twice with the same meaning.
- 3252 *wisshith hit me*: this would seem to be an invented impersonal construction suggested by the (reflexive) form of the Fr: *Me souhaide*.
- 3255 The scribe neglected to leave space for the usual large capital (St mistakenly places it at the beginning of the previous line, but the scribe of the autograph [Fr] manuscript lays it out correctly).

3256–57 These lines are intended to answer the charges of *Wikkid Speche*. Line 3263, then, expresses the lover's dismay that the lady could even think of believing such lies.

3258–60 The scribe indicates that three lines should be repeated, though the *as* . . . *as* construction in 3256–57 makes a three-line refrain awkward. The three-line refrain works better in the Fr version:

Savez pourquoi, mon bien joyeux,
 Celle du monde qu'ayme mieulx
 De loyal cueur, sans changement,
 Ou regard [de voz beaulx doulx yeulx,]
 Dont loing [suis par les envieux,]
 Me souhaide [si tressouvent?]

3261–62 Forwhi: gives the answer to the question beginning in 3255. This line prepares for the irony in 3262; the only pleasure he receives from her is her disdain.

3265 Werthefully: the word is unattested. The lady withholds her glance from the lover on account of (to preserve) her honor.

3269–74 my eye: the scribe rarely slips up on *my/myn* forms, but his other difficulties may have caused him to overlook this one. The poet, too, seems to have had unusual difficulty in turning the first stanza from octosyllabic Fr into decasyllabic E and maintaining a rhyme scheme at the same time: "de bien en mieulx" becomes "from gret to more goodly." These same difficulties on the part of poet or scribe, whatever they were, may account for the length of lines 3271–72 and the incorrect form *plesaunt* in 3272.

3283 This might well have been an occasional poem. Cf. B 53, where there is some confusion as to whether May is male or female.

3305–6 grise: literally "to shudder"; the word was chosen to suit the rhyme. Spence reads something like "cast all concern away that troubles you" (*French Chansons*, 24–25), but the lover is rather asking the lady not to hesitate to test him (presumably because of some natural womanly distaste for such an act). Cf. Alford, s.v. *assaien*.

3311 At this point the order of roundels diverges from that of the Fr chansons. Apparently the scribe was copying from a quire containing roundels 11 to 26 that became accidentally disarranged (the manuscripts at this point being unbound); the second bifolium (R 13, 14, 23, 24) was placed on the inside of the quire, giving the roundel order 11–12, 15–18, 13–14, 23–24, 19–22, 25–26. This disarrangement must have been prior to the copying of H, as the quiring is different (the Harley quire begins with R 9) and the leaf after R 20 has been left blank, though the numbering of the roundels is consecutive. Except for this disarrangement, the order of the E roundels follows that of the Fr chansons exactly. The order of the Fr poems in the autograph manuscript was certainly approved by Charles. The fact that the order of the E poems was never corrected provides evidence that (since he did not correct the numbering) Charles did not intend that the roundels "tell a story"; the "banquet" is simply a collection of lyrics (on the reordering of some of the ballades, see Introduction, "Relation of

- Harley 682 to Charles's Autograph Manuscript"). See S&D 3138n.
 3312 Octosyllabic.
- 3315 The scribe neglected to leave space for the usual large capital.
- 3319 hit: apparently omitted before *cry*.
- 3327 So willith me: "This construction is not recorded in E, but it may well have been written by a foreigner on the analogy of such phrases as *Whi lustith you*, 3322" (S&D). Cf. 3252.
- 3329 The scribe neglected to leave space for the usual large capital.
- 3333 werid . . . with: Charles's use of *with* rather than *bi* might seem to support the idea that he is playing on "make war on" and "make weary," though his use of prepositions is often erratic. See 255n.
 Fr: Desplaisir me guerroye.
- 3343 to geef: *me* omitted (the scribe of the Oxbridge manuscript failed to notice the omission).
- 3346 For other examples of this proverbial expression see *KnT* 1566, *Lyd BlkKn* 489, and OED, s.v. shirt 2c. The image is reinvoked in 3354 when Death stands at his *sleve*.
- 3353 The lover's moods sometimes vacillate between extremes as in this stanza. He challenges Love and demands justice, then collapses into despondency.
- 3358 S&D call attention to the poet's "imitation" of Chaucer's *Pity*, but his source, if he needed one, may well have been French or Italian.
- 3360 The cadence of the lines suggests that the rhymes *ordeynydl/enprisonydl/bandonydl/raunsonydl/gardonyd* are probably masculine (*-onyd* pronounced as one syllable), lines 3359–60 probably being headless and lines 3367–68, octosyllabic (*onys* is monosyllabic).
- 3361 The phrase "the bewte of yowre goodlihed," which seems tautologous, is in fact a bit of padding.
 Fr: de vostre grant beauté loingtains.
- 3365 A did not correct the refrain (to agree with 3359; MS: *Suche is myn*), and the new line does not make especially good sense in this position. The scribe of the Oxbridge MS picked up other revisions of A, but did not think to correct this one.
- 3369 "Surely the lover should not wish to be freed from the spell of his lady's beauty" (S&D); true, but Daunger's "spell" insures that the lover remain imprisoned, i.e., that he never succeed in his suit. He asks to be released from (her) *daunger* so that he may be free to act. It is not impossible that this last line contains a sexual double entendre.
- 3371 MS: *Suche is myn*
- 3377 The scribe neglected to leave space for the usual large capital.
- 3384 straungely chere: OED gives no adj form with *-ly* (cf. adv form without ending in 4778). The line is octosyllabic.
- 3391 poore: disyllabic.
- 3405 This roundel provides convincing evidence that the roundels are a miscellaneous collection without any connection with the "plot" of the work except that stated by the speaker in B 84. The lover has not been banished from Love's *hou*s; he petitioned to leave it. The lady has not

“sworn his death”; she is herself dead.

3408 delyuerid: ironic.

3410 The poet plays on *servir/deserven*.

Fr: Car pas ne doy ce mois servir.

3413–16 He has lost his way (i.e., Comfort) because *Mysfortune* has wounded him, which is to say his lady is unkind. His loss of Comfort together with the attack of Misfortune comprise his double sorrow. These last words echo the opening of the *Troilus*; Troilus himself may well have provided one model for Charles’s excessively doleful lover.

Fr: De confort ay perdu la voye,
Et ne me veult on plus ouvrir
La barriere de Doulx Plaisir,
Par Desespoir qui me guerroye.

The word *entirmell* in the E may be intended to carry overtones of its other meaning, “to be locked in battle,” which would draw out the metaphor a bit further.

3419 Champion suggests (*Poésies*, 565, XXIVn) that the Fr version of this poem may allude to financial help Charles received while in England from the house of Armagnac (family of his wife Bonne). Both the Fr and the E may be occasional poems offered to ladies, but if Champion’s guess is correct, this is one of several Fr poems on other subjects which Charles adapted into E as love poems.

3424 goode doon good: Whiting & Whiting (1968) list “Good comes of good [and ill ofttime of ill]” c. 1450. The modern “pretty is as pretty does” may be related.

3430 The lover’s plan to “ransom yow or eve” suggests perhaps a payment of kisses “before evening.”

3437 Here and in 3451, the scribe neglected to leave space for the usual large capital.

3458 The line is short. Perhaps *hit* has been omitted after *hert*, or *goon* should be *agoon*.

3461 Perhaps a reflexive dative with intransitive *askape* (Mustanoja, 100), though Charles may have simply created the reflexive form.

3463 redres: MED glosses “relief.”

3476–77 Octosyllabic.

3478 in bandone: generally means “in captivity” or “under someone’s control” but the meaning here is “abandoned” (Fr: “abandonner”). This cannot therefore be a mistranslation of the Fr, but a misunderstanding of the E expression.

3489 Either the line is a syllable too long (If the masculine rhyme falls on the plural ending) or the rhyme is spoiled.

3499–3500 arent: although MED gives no such meaning, OED records the meaning “pay rent for” from 1530. In the Fr version of the poem it is the lady (*beauté*) who would make the lover a “renter” (*renté*, i.e., one who must pay rent) for her love. In E it seems to be (the sight of) her beauty which is so dear, whereas in the Fr it is her love (unless “yowre most plesaunt fresshe

- bewte" is a form of address, as is "vostre tresplaisant beauté" in the Fr, but this seems unlikely in this context). These lines are decasyllabic.
- 3505 *soiowr*: OED gives *soiorn(e)*, *soiourn(e)*. The final *-n* may have been omitted to fit the rhyme.
- 3511–14 These lines should rhyme *abba*. It is difficult to account for the spelling *sowre*, especially as it seems to represent a spelling more common in the *b* rhyme: (*a*: *vpbore/evirmore/tofore/sowre/sore* as against *b*: *honour/soiowr/favoure/valowre/tresowre*). It is most likely a simple error for *swore* ("sworn") by the scribe, who did not pay close attention to the rhyme scheme.
- 3522 Spence suggests that "the sense of this poem depends upon taking 'see' and 'say' as paranomastic [sic] and, at least subliminally, synonymous [sic]. So, for example, in lines 2, 5–6, 10" (*Chansons*, 229). The idea is attractive, but unfortunately the forms used for the two words do not suggest this except in the rhyme word *say* ("saw") in line 3522, and this spelling was surely chosen to "match" the spelling of *day/away*. Though the play on *say* is evident in 3521–22, the poem does not depend on their synonymy; he sees visions of his lady and he speaks to her of those visions both in her absence (that is, to no one) and in the letter he sends.
- 3531–36 An unusually regular use, for Charles, of the caesura.
- 3542 *sydys*: *d* may be a miswriting (or misreading) of *ð* [eth].
- 3545 Fr: *Se mon propos vient a contraire*
 Certes, je l'ay bien desservy.
- 3568 In the Fr version he lives in distress for three months; as usual the English lover suffers more.
- 3590 *rekeuer*: apparently disyllabic.
- 3601 *within* would seem to be required by both sense and meter.
- 3602 In R 33 through R 43, "kissing poems" alternate with poems in which kisses are not mentioned (see also R 47, 48, 57).
- 3619 At S&D's suggestion, I have inserted *with* after *were*.
- 3621 For the spelling *ben*, cf. 5715.
- 3637 in his shert: cf. *T&C* 4.96.
- 3638 *currishshenes*: S&D ("ill-breeding") are closer to the mark here than MED: "attitude of a (?mean) watchdog." The word, both here and in 1796 means "baseness, ignobleness" from *cur*: "small hunting dog . . . esp. a mongrel, cur, stray" (MED). Both the *evesedroppere* and Daunger are showing their baseness by their opposition to the lover. (OED, s.v. *currish*: mean-spirited, base, ignoble).
- 3643–56 Fr: *Comment vous puis je tant amer*
 Et mon cuer si tresfort hair
 Qu'il ne me chault de desplaisir
 Qu'il puisse pour vous endurer?
 Son mal m'est joyeux a porter,
 Mais qu'il vous puisse bien servir

 Las! or ne deusse je penser

Qu'a le garder et chier tenir,
Et non pour tant, mon seul desir, . . .

S&D object strongly to Charles's revamping of this poem in its E version, saying that he has destroyed the argument of the whole poem by changing it. He has indeed altered the relations within the poem, but he has not written nonsense. "Which" (3645) must be taken to refer to the lady, who is not attentive to the lover; this idea is picked up, then, in 3650–51. This is the kind of change the poet commonly makes.

3647 Octosyllabic.

3657 *prays*: line 3665 makes clear that in this context it must be "prize" and not "praise." Fr: "prize." Spence suggests that the Fr is a loan word from E, but Poirion glosses *prisier*, "apprécier, estimer" (*Le Lexique*).

cossis Dowche: an interesting expression that does not appear in the Fr, it is not recorded by MED, but clearly refers to ceremonial kisses as opposed to kisses of *plesaunce*. Spence translates "sweet" (OF *douce*), but ceremonial kisses are hardly sweet and would provide a weak contrast to kisses of *plesaunce* (*Chansons*, 74–75, and "French *Chansons*," 290). The Germans (or Dutch) were known for excessive ceremonial kissing, providing exactly the kind of specific detail that Charles is attracted to in his E poetry. On the disappearance of the kiss from French feudal ceremonies and its retention in England, see Major (esp. 526 n. 30). On the other hand, Jones says that "most kisses in MHG literature occur on fixed occasions, particularly at welcomes, farewells, reconciliations, and negotiations" (201), and he goes on to distinguish between French (erotic) and German kisses (209). On formal occasions there were of course rules about the niceties of the giving and receiving of kisses (one example of an etiquette book containing such guidelines is *The Honours of the Court* mentioned by Vaughan in his *Valois Burgundy*, 184). This charming poem is a fine example of the delicate but perfectly prepared little birds the generous host has provided in abundance for his guests.

3660 *towche*: i.e., kiss; some do it for the sake of appearances and in order to win friendship, but others for baser physical reasons.

3661 *crosse* or *crowche*: any coin with a cross on it.

3679 *That*: S&D call this a possible scribal error, but perhaps not. The lover says he has "oon poore hope," which is "that my faynt hert. . ."

3681 *nar*: plural for singular, perhaps intended as a subjunctive (*ner*).

3685–3703 Cf. R 57. Poems like these have been used as evidence that Charles had one or another serious attachment (or affair) with one or more English ladies. (Champion suggests the wife of Robert Waterton, or even Alice Chaucer, in "Prince des lis," 23). They are more likely the equivalent of greeting cards or simply compositions in a sub-genre masquerading as *jeux d'esprits*.

3688 The poet's switch from subjunctive to indicative is not unusual.

3699 *alls*: "also"; crossed double *l* occurs within a word nowhere except here.

3704 This roundel contains a play on "seekfull," "seeklew," "seek," "seeke."

3720–22 In the Fr version of this poem the lover "buys" kisses, not outright

but against the collateral of his heart (Fr: "en aurés mon cueur en gage"). The kisses he receives he owns absolutely ("pour les prendre par heritage"). In the E version, the lover likewise leaves his heart "in morgage," but it is also given absolutely to the lady to dispense with as she wishes (3720). I can see no solution to this paradox. Apparently the roundel has been only partially recast. (Its inconsistency is no argument for a translator, as the inconsistency would have been just as apparent to him as to the original author.)

3723 *me* seems to have been omitted after *with*.

3724 *dwelle*: the form (without *-s*) follows the exigencies of the rhyme.

3729 *bargeyne*: see Alford, s.v. *bargain*.

3730 *with forsorow*: if Charles intended *forsorow* as a noun, it is the only compound with *for-* he creates to make one (though ME allowed such formations). The use of the word *forswell* (puff up with pride or anger) suggests that the poet may have intended *forsorow* to mean something like "extreme vexation." S&D print *for sorow* and suggest that *with* means "against" ("though Daunger against [the bargain] swell up on account of sorrow"), or perhaps "therewith."

Fr: Mon vueil et mon desir entiers
Sont vostres, maugré tous dangiers.

3732 Fr: *partage*.

3740 The scribe has erred in beginning this line with a large capital rather than the following one (and S&D reproduce his capital).

3761-62 S&D's reading, "It is grievous to him to be awakened from sleep (he will be in a bad temper)," is plausible, but my suggestion seems more straightforward.

Fr: Jamais ne puist s'esveillier!
Faittes tost et parlez bas.

3766 The Fr version of this poem is addressed to a man ("mon bel amy sans per"), presumably from a woman. The E poems are in fact unusual in this period for maintaining the masculine voice throughout the lyric sections.

3770 Fr: *Car mon cueur m'a voulu laissier*.

3772 Alwhere: MED does not pick up S&D's gloss, "everywhere," but see OED, s.v. *allwhere*.

3777 S&D suggest that *ther* has been omitted before *in*.

3784 *Deservaunce* ("deserving") does not seem a likely reading; it is probably an error for *Deseraunce*, "desire," in spite of *my desere* in 3791.

Fr.: amoureux desir.

3786 *ioyous, fresshe manere*: the spelling is made to match the rhyme; Charles's usual spelling is *manar*.

Fr: manoir de Joye.

3795 Octosyllabic.

3807 *slepen*: "This seems an early case of the incorrect use of *-n* in the verb-singular" (Hammond, *English Verse*, 473); cf. 1391.

3821 So that: "though" (see MED, s.v. *so* 16b).

3825 Fr: "bonne lettre seelee."

- 3831 *me* has been omitted after the second *bas*. Burrow cites Skelton's "Speke, Parott," 104: "Bas me, swete Parrot, bas me, swete swete"; and *MilT* 3709: "Com ba me," saying "the allusion is evidently to a popular song" (*English Verse*, 292).
- Fr: *Vostre bouche dit: Baisiez moy.*
- 3833 Daunger stant so nygh: perhaps in her eyes?
- 3842 This image is absent from the Fr.
- 3845-58 The poet has changed the central metaphor, though retaining some of the same imagery of the Fr version, which turns on the idea of great quantities of deception vs. minuscule advantages in love. In the E version Charles emphasizes the inextricably entwined double nature of love.
- 3859 *the*: probably a scribal error for *thy*. The line is proverbial (Whiting & Whiting, F634; Tilley, F694; see also Morawski, no. 171; Bohn, 6, 41; Le Roux de Lincy, 2.232 and 485). Champion writes of the Fr version of this roundel, "Vers 1433? La chanson est sans doute pour Philippe le Bon" (2.566), an idea he seems to have found in Chalvet's 1803 edition. Champion's dating "system" is, however, untrustworthy.
- 3869-70 A common style of epistolary closing.
- 3873 Octosyllabic. Cf. *LBD* 1443-46.
- 3876 A proverbial statement cited uniquely in Whiting & Whiting (F282), but references to related proverbs (F141, F428) show that the idea is a common one; cf. Cotgrave, s.v. *coeur*: "Qui n'a coeur, ait jambas: Prov. *He that dares not trust to his hands had best trust to his heeles; or, he that dares not fight may do well to flie.*" Poems in which proverbs appear seem to come in loose clusters. In particular, this part of the roundel series and the second ballade sequence seem to be thickly sprinkled with them.
- 3881 An octosyllabic line, but S&D suggest on the basis of the Fr ("Retrayez vous soubz l'estandart") that *vndir* has been omitted before *the*.
- 3887-90 The author of the Fr counterpart was not Charles (S&D posit a lady as author of the Fr chanson and suggest that it "has been altered so that it may be addressed to presumably a different lady"). See 1285n. Inasmuch as Charles includes in his E poems a version of a poem by Christine de Pisan (B 59) and another by Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy (B 113), the fact that he may have turned a roundel by another hand into E (or indeed Fr) is no impediment to the argument that both English ballades are his own work (see also 4011n). On the other hand, another poet may have borrowed Charles's lines 1285-88 for the opening of his or her own chanson.
- 3892 so wis God helpe me so: cf. *BD* 550, 1235; *NPT* 4598; and Pearsall, *Variorum*, 252.
- 3902 *hevy*: in the sense of too large a quantity, too much. The word was probably chosen for its connotations of "sorrow, woe." The poem would seem to involve a sexual metaphor. None of the remaining roundels have Fr counterparts.
- 3905 The scribe neglected to indent the line in order to leave room for the usual capital letter.

- 3915–28 This roundel, full of word play, is a favorite of anthologists. Its dreamlike atmosphere filled with very concrete images and clever puns may account in part for its appeal. An interesting comparison has been made to Wyatt's translation from Petrarch, "Who list to hount" (Leyerle, 114–18), as well as to his "They fle from me" (Nathan; see 1340n). The sentiment expressed is quite unlike that of the rest of the work.
- 3919 The scribe neglected to leave space for the usual large capital.
- 3920 hay: used as a call with hunting dogs. This is another instance of the poet "creating" a verb out of a word (in this case an interjection) not earlier used as one. The sense here seems to be that the lover has been too forward, assuming too quickly that his feelings are returned and thereby alienating his lady (hers is the heart of 3916). The line is clearly related to the proverb "Not to halloo until one is out of the wood" (OED, s.v. halloo 2b). The modern Dutch proverb: "roep geen hei, voor gij over de brug zijt" (never call "hey" till you are over the bridge), suggests that this "hey!" may be more proverbial than technical (nothing like it is to be found as a call in *The Master of Game*).
- 3929–34 The meter, the grammar of the first stanza, and the form of the refrain are all somewhat problematic. S&D suggest that *a syn* has been omitted after *fowle* in 3930 (cf. 110), which leaves only 3931–32 as octosyllabic.
- 3935 This line (as well as line 3956, the corresponding line in the following ballade) should be a *b* rhyme rather than an *a* rhyme. I am grateful to Gregory Bouman for pointing this out and for sharing his discussion of these roundels with me, in the form of an unpublished paper entitled "Refrain from a Musical Tradition: The English Roundels of Charles d'Orléans."
- 3936 S&D suggest MS *hem* refers to "ladies" (though it has no plural referent); perhaps it is an error for *her*.
- 3937 The form of the refrain is a complete anomaly among the roundels of Harley 682. It is more likely a scribal error than a poetic innovation, since the first line makes no sense in the context here (3940) or at the end of the poem. If the first two lines are repeated, the poem makes sense but does not follow the roundel form, and the same is true if all five lines are repeated. I have therefore printed the poem as it stands.
- 3945 to bewail: parallels *endure* in the previous line.
the tyme y evir se: the day I was born (S&D).
- 3953 yowre hard suffraunce: apparently an unusual collocation, meaning "your cruel patience (in allowing my suffering to continue)." Cf. *LBD* 545: "hard suffraunce" (translating Chartier, st. 65, line 517: "durté").
- 3977 In religious terms, make satisfaction. This is another frequently anthologized poem, one of a series of "kissing poems" among the roundels. For another lyric built on the images of confession, see Rondeau CCCLXI. Cf. also 5275–78.
- 3980 The charm of this poem lies, among other things, in the twist of asking forgiveness only if he does *not* restore the stolen property, i.e., the kiss.

3984 Richard Green has suggested that this may refer to a love token in the shape of a heart ("Hearts, Minds," 147).

Whiting & Whiting cite this line, as well as 4344–45 (S381), but in fact the two expressions are different. The later passage describes deception; this one a sincere wish. (Neither expression is equivalent to wearing one's heart on one's sleeve.) In fact this line may not involve a proverbial expression at all. The lover simply wants to give the lady his heart; the obvious place for her to put it would be in her sleeve (where small knives or other objects were often carried).

3999 high parage: from Fr ("de haut parage"), the phrase did not originate with Charles (Prins, 227).

4004 Though the spelling *bethynke* does not occur in the MS, the scribe has written *be-* here and in 4010.

4005 Octosyllabic. Lines 4005–8 invert the correct rhyme scheme, rhyming *baab* instead of (properly) *abba*.

4011 This roundel is an adaptation into E of a poem published in Vérard's *Le Jardin de Plaisance*, an anthology printed in 1501 in which a number of Charles's Fr poems appeared (it does not appear among the poems of O):

Adieu ma tresbelle maitresse
 Adieu celle que iayme tant
 Adieu vous dy tout mon viuant
 Adieu lespoir de ma liesse

Je ne puis parler de tristesse
 Tant mest le partir desplaisant
 Adieu &c.

Car pleurs et lermes a destresse
 Seront en moy doresenauant
 Quant ne verray le doulx semblant
 De vo belle plaisant ieunesse
 Adieu &c.

(no. 363, fol. 95 verso)

See Cigada, "Christine de Pisan," 515–16.

4015 The scribe neglected to leave space for the usual large capital. From here to the end of the series the scribe becomes increasingly careless about leaving room at this line in the roundels (ordinary capitals are used at 4030, 4043, 4057, 4071, 4099, 4127, 4141, 4155, 4169, 4183, 4211, 4281, 4295, 4309).

4025–38 This would seem to be one of the poems which was not looked over and corrected by the author. Although *drivith* is not an unusual form for Charles to use as a plural (4027), both *dilayes* (4026) and *dayes* (4027) are awkward plurals. Line 4034 has been left incomplete (lacking a word to rhyme with *wayes*), which complicates the reading of the stanza. Daunt attempts to explain *say this* as "a scribe's 'improvement' on an original *say es*, or *say is*, 'say it'" (*Rhymes*, 137), but Charles never uses those forms, and the line is short.

- S&D suggest that *ther* in 1435 may be an error for *thes*, and they gloss *respite* (1436), "put off." The difficulty with this gloss is that it is the heart (which is dying of sorrow) who is being addressed (unless "ferful . . . vayne" is some sort of parenthesis). Perhaps: "Fy, fearful heart, who continually seeks new (other) ways for the sole purpose of granting me (your servant) a temporary respite, but all in vain."
- 4039 S&D see reminiscences of *KnT* in this roundel, esp. *KnT* 1042–45 and 1491–94.
- 4048 þat as was: perhaps "such as was."
- 4050 day: the scribe probably picked up the spelling from the previous line.
- 4053 Though he mentions her *jantillesse*, the lover's emphasis is on the lady's beauty, which he expresses as *goodlynes*.
- 4063–64 Octosyllabic.
- 4067 Here Charles chooses another epistolary theme, composing a roundel which gets no further than the material that precedes the letter proper.
- 4068 or þat y to yow write: i.e., before I begin the substance of my letter.
- 4082 The image of the lover's childhood returns again, with fond memories of love received from his "nursemaid" and "governess" (i.e., his late lady). This lyric is an odd mixture of the erotic and the religious.
- 4095 This roundel seems to draw out the notion of the lady as (the child's) teacher.
- 4098 Three fie's on the lady's three nay's.
- 4104 aftirmore: perhaps a garbled form of "evermore" (orig. ?*afirmore*) or ?*afterhand*, "afterward."
- 4105 to lijf ywrought: perhaps *ybrought* was the original intention. On the other hand, the awkward infinitive in the following line might confirm the suspicion that the author's grasp of his syntax was not always firm.
- 4109 me bithought is of: this construction seems to be some sort of conflation of a passive (I am bithought of) and a reflexive ([I] bethought me of).
- 4120 S&D suggest that *now* should not have been omitted before *wel*. Though Charles uses the construction frequently (1342, 3854, 4087, etc.), it is more likely that he did not intend the full form here. The line makes perfectly good sense without it, and the addition of an extra syllable would spoil the meter.
- 4126 towchis nyse: S&D gloss "impressions," following OED (s.v. touch, III.13b). The phrase "tacchis nise" in 4335 suggests that this is another form of (or an error for) the same phrase; I have consequently glossed "bad habits" (i.e., foolish behavior).
- 4140 fetis lite: "little feet"; a double plural. The physicality implied in this roundel anticipates 4827ff.
- 4145 gef y durste or may: the lack of concord between the verbs is probably due to the need for a rhyme.
- 4146–47 as: see OED, s.v. as 24. Octosyllabic.
- 4151 This roundel reverses the metrical pattern in this work of a shorter (octosyllabic) first line: here the opening line is decasyllabic; the rest, octosyllabic. This is one of the very colloquial roundels that hint at the

casual, witty style of the later Blois rondeaux.

4152 Lydgate defines the word *townyssh*e in his description of the townspeople crowding around the arriving Jason and Hercules in his *TB*:

Þus eueryche wolde with his felawe rowne;

Þei wern so rude to staren and to gase,

To gape & loke, as it wer on a mase;

Þis townysche folk do so comownly

On euery þing þat falleth sodeinly.

(1.1336–40)

Late medieval writers opposed urban to courtly behavior (whereas our age opposes rural to urban), so that we might gloss *townyssh*e behavior as (paradoxically) “boorish” (the same sort of meaning is intended by *lewde* in 4155).

It is curious that William Dunbar should have written a line involving this odd collocation: “ȝe be to townage, be this buke, / To be my ladeis presoneir” (Kinsley, 9.39–40; also 13.10). Kinsley glosses “bourgeois, uncourtly.” There seem to be no other verbal echoes of *Fortunes Stablnes* in Dunbar’s work.

S&D think that the “book” referred to is the book of roundels, but Kinsley’s gloss, “an oath sworn on the Gospels,” suggests that it is equivalent here to simply “I swear!” (In the opening allegory of the Fr version, the narrator enters the service of love by swearing with his hands “sur ung livre,” 382.)

4154 on: St reads *ou* here and in 4156 and seems to suggest that they are scribal errors for *you*. The scribe uses the spelling *you* (never *ou*) in only four instances in this MS, as against 524 instances *yow*. It would be easier to read *on*, “one.”

4155 *knakkis* *askaunce*: *knakkis* is monosyllabic. S&D suggest that the phrase may be an error for *knaves* *avaunce* and read “Your manners . . . cause you to take pleasure in the way you allow such worthless fellows to, etc.” This would solve the apparent problem of the lack of a verb in 4155–56 (*wise*, “leads”). Lydgate’s “definition” of townishness, however, points to “gaping” as the charge against Love (and indeed looking for and gazing on Beauty is an important love problem; see B 82). Love causes problems by letting the eyes look unrestrainedly at the objects of their affections; they should look at them only at the proper times, and otherwise only once a week. Cf. R 87, 88, 91.

4159 *glauce*: though not given with this meaning in MED (*glenchen*, “glance aside”) and not in OED before 1583, the word obviously refers to the act of looking (cf. 4156).

4166 Cf. 3486 and B 33.

4170 The poet generalizes from one woman to womankind.

4193 For another instance of this expression see 4779. The expression is not otherwise attested, but *nice* in this instance must mean something like “smooth” (in the social as well as in the physical sense). Perhaps the closest definition given by OED is in the phrase *make it nice*, “display reserve” (s.v. *nice*). The speaker is counselling his heart (rather sternly

- and impatiently) to give up its wild swings of emotion and compose itself. For such emotional swings as a symptom of lovesickness, see Wack, 63–65. MED follows S&D in glossing “delicate.” Whiting & Whiting cite *Fortunes Stabilnes* uniquely.
- 4195 bi seynt Gyle: St. Giles once cured a man possessed by the devil, who was disturbing the faithful in a church. Perhaps his heart’s alternate weeping and smiling (4198) reminds the lover of the actions of a madman (*Golden Legend*, Aegidius, September 1).
- 4196 titill fitill: OED gives only *fiddle* in this sense, (though *tiddle* in the sense “fidget, fuss, fiddle” is attested in the eighteenth century).
- 4199–4200 The scribe has written both refrain cues on the same line, leaving a blank line at the bottom of the page. I have separated them and numbered each to maintain S&D’s numbering.
- 4201 The scribe wrote *an ay*, which he apparently picked up from 4193.
- 4202 or: MED explains (2b): introducing a clause which tells the consequences of failing to obey a preceding command or entreaty (cf. *MilT* 3712).
- 4203 fil . . . from: lit. “polish out or away.” In this context the phrase might be roughly paraphrased “shed this hypersensitivity.”
- 4221 Octosyllabic, as is 4218.
- 4221 *Almes* is disyllabic, as the spelling in the refrain lines makes clear. The following line is hexasyllabic.
- 4229 S&D are probably correct that the scribe has mistaken *y met*, intended as present (“meet”; rhyme: *feet*), for a ppl, “correcting” *as* to *is*. Daunt suggests that *y met* could be the ppl of *mete(n)*, “measure” (141).
- 4236 Cf. 3063.
- 4240 glide: a word probably chosen for rhyme rather than meaning.
- 4253–54 The answer is the lady, of course.
- 4263 fondist: “are mad”; MED does not record the word in this sense, and the first use as a vb in OED is ?1530 (s.v. *fond v*, but see *fond a* and *sb* 3). It may, of course, be an error for *fonnist* (cf. 368).
- 4265 An ironic tidbit in light of the banquet in which it is served: a retirement from love.
- 4277 *poore* is disyllabic.
- 4280 See Alford, s.v. *dischergen II*.
- 4286 *desperaunce*: S&D suggest that this is an error for *desesperaunce*, which would better fit the meter. Either form is possible (this one is easily constructed from *despair*; Chaucer uses both *despair* and *desesper*), and the line may well be headless, with the stress on the second syllable of *desert*. Charles never uses the longer form (cf. 1018).
- 4291 *Oblesse* is apparently Fr *obli* with a noun suffix added, on the analogy of *noblesse*; *porrar* should perhaps be ?*porrai*. (In 5984 the poet uses the word *oblyaunce*, uniquely.) Charles produces macaronic verse elsewhere: “Satis, satis, plus quam satis, / N’en avez vous encor assés?” (Chanson LXXXVI); “Non temptabis, tien te coy, / Regard plain d’atrayement” (Chanson LXXXVII); these have no E counterparts.

- 4300–4302 The woeful speaker seems to address his guests here and in the following roundel. The fact that roundels 95–101 were never copied into the manuscript (the leaves are blank except for roundel numbers) suggests that Charles composed these last two poems as a closing for the series before he had completed all the others.
- 4305 Galien: trisyllabic in Chaucer. The word play in this roundel revolves around the image of the serving of wine at the end of the banquet of roundels (see B 84). Seeming to refer to two famous physicians from among the ancients, in line 4308 it becomes clear that the names are puns on the names of two drinks. *Ipocras* is a cordial, a concoction of red wine, sugar, and spices drunk for pleasure as well as for its medicinal value (see *R&S*, 3396ff., but also *TB* 2.58, where “pyment, bawme, and ypocras” are clearly intended as three remedies). *Galen* is also a medicinal drink (*CT*, C.306, Skeat’s note in *Works*, 5.266, and the *Cyurgie* of Guy de Chauliac, 631, 636). The host is saying to his guests, “This drink will not do me any good, but I hope that it will please you (even though it is not as clear as I would like).” At the same time, 4305–6 echo such sentiments as the Black Knight expresses in *BD*: “Ne hele me may no phisicien, / Noght Ypocras ne Galyen” (571–72). At this point the ex-lover makes clear that his supposed retirement from Love has been in vain and that he is just as “sick” as ever, in spite of having gone through the motions of a retreat and cure (on the usefulness of wine in treating lovesickness, see Wack, 63, 81, 104, 190–91).
- 4310 trobly: means both “cloudy” and “distressing” (cf. *CA* 6.354–64). Charles is fond of the literal and metaphorical opposition of cloudy (ME *-trobly*, Fr *troubler*) and clear (ME *fyn*, *aclere*, Fr *esclercie*) liquids (see 1711 and Rondeau CCCXXV).
- 4313 *hit* is probably omitted before *doth*; its addition improves the meter.
- 4319–88 Grace was commonly said at the end of the meal. The narrator claims he cannot say a proper (religious) grace because he is a servant not of God Almighty (*a clerk*) but of the God of Love (4321–22). He then proceeds to say a kind of grace anyway, ending with the blessing in the stanza beginning in 4382. Both this section and the washing/wishing that follows (ending with the dance) are part of the courtly ceremony celebrated in both life and art in the late Middle Ages (on the dance and the ceremony surrounding it, see Stevens, 167–69). Fifteen blank lines at the top of this leaf may have been left for decoration.
- 4328 *fedde*: error for *feode* “infeof” (S&D). The food image was probably picked up from what preceded.
strijf: MED omits this spelling.
- 4332 *enpresse*: form of *emprise* (Daunt, 144).
- 4338 *browderure*: the spelling is extraordinary. *Broudur/brouderie/broudering* are all possible spellings for “embroidery,” whereas a *brouderer* is an “embroiderer.” Perhaps Charles added an extra syllable (or altered the suffix) to fill out the meter and match the rhyme.
- 4342 The sense of this line seems to be that a fast-talking man without honor

might choose women for trivial reasons, calling more than one woman his lady, which is a linguistic impossibility in the honorable lover's language (and contrasts strongly with the narrator's rhetoric). In real life, however, things could run differently, even among the nobility; for an account of the Duke de Berri's disgraceful suggestion that one should dissemble, see Green, "Troilus," 206.

toy: though not attested this early by OED (or Halliwell-Phillipps), the word here appears to mean a person as plaything, a trivializing term for "woman" (OED, s.v. toy 8).

4344-45 keverkope: "kerchief"; a Frenchman's Anglicization of *cueuvrechief*, "cover-cop"?

Charles's use of *sleue* here (and in 3984) implies that there is already a developed metaphor of wearing a lady's heart (not one's own) on or in one's sleeve, represented here as wrapped in a *keverkope*, an object reminiscent of his *kercher of plesaunce* (see Cotgrave, s.v. manchon; also Gairdner, 1.40-41). Whiting & Whiting cite Skelton, *Speke*, 2.21.423: "he careyth a kyng in hys sleve, yf all the worlde fayle." The expression also exists in Fr: "avoir une personne dans sa manche" (Le Roux de Lincy, 2.174); "chacun a un fou dans sa manche" (Bohn, 12). Like 3984, this line does not refer to the kind of show of feelings so scorned by Iago in *Othello* 1.1.64.

4349 so: the manuscript clearly reads *so* rather than *lo* (S&D's reading), probably in error.

4351 report: the meaning "pronounce, assert" is slightly strained, but the word was probably chosen to fit the rhyme.

4352 hem: properly it should be *yow*, since he is addressing lovers, but such small shifts are common in these poems.

4354 S&D print *lov is*, but the spelling *lov* occurs nowhere in the MS, whereas *lovis* (possessive) occurs twelve times; the scribe misread the line.

4356 avoche: Daunt explains the vowel as lengthened by metrical stress (152).

4359 champion: see Alford, s.v. champion.

4378-86 Octosyllabic.

4382 In this final stanza of his "prayer" the poet returns to the beginning, calling on the God of Love to protect his faithful followers.

4385 as that y haue seid aboue: one more proof of the distance of this discourse from orality.

4389 The twelve blank lines between 4388 and 4389, whether intended for decoration of some kind or not, clearly mark a division between the grace and the customary washing of hands at the end of the meal. The section that follows the prayer involves an elaborate play on wishing and washing. (Charles turns everything—eating, drinking, washing—into words.) Harrison calls this section "an after-dinner reading" (*Allegorical Mode*, 92).

Though the scribe usually matches the spelling of rhyme words, he here allows *wesshe/disshe*, perhaps because he saw the pun and realized that the *wisshe* spelling would obscure it. This list is similar to the list of Love's commandments in the opening allegory (see Introduction, "Argument of the Poem").

- 4391-92 The repetition of *no* is awkward, but the remnants of virgules in the erasure imply that, as elsewhere in the manuscript, a word is repeated. The word play is drawn out here: "your hands are not dirty" also means that the narrator has presented no "foul" thoughts in his roundels.
- 4401-2 *soth/worthe*: final *-e* is no problem in these poems, but the rhyming of long and short *o*, as well as *o* with *or*, is difficult to account for. Daunt suggests that the *r* is an error and that *worthe* is a form for *wot*, glossing, "No other knows me as now I know myself" (146). The gloss does not fit the context particularly well, but the line has been altered and may have been incorrectly or incompletely rectified.
- 4406 *mase*: MED gives "be confused, bewildered" and cites this passage, but surely the context requires something like "be distraught" (with grief) or "faint" (with woe or sorrow).
- 4408-9 *loo/do*: on the rhyme, see Daunt, 144.
- 4413-14 The comparison follows the form of a number of others (I wish I were as *X* as she is *Y*) but does not work in the same way. If the lover were as "poor" (i.e., had as much) as the lady is rich in Fortune's gifts, he would be rich indeed. This equation is reinforced by the following one: I wish I were her equal in all amendment (of my faults).
I have attempted to number the poet's "wishes," but other readers may feel that my divisions should be adjusted here and there. The passage is a difficult one. As usual, it is hard to know whether the author was aiming at a particular number of items (perhaps twenty?). (S&D title this section "End of Banquet, Three Wishes.") I have not attempted to reproduce Charles's syntax in my paraphrases because of the complexity of this - single, long utterance.
- 4416 S&D's suggestion that there is no pause at the end of this line may be correct; it is possible, however, to read: (I wish) my heart served God as much as her spirit does (is set wholly to do).
- 4418 S&D suggest that *hirid* is a corruption of *spirid* and that *lich* is a repetition of *liche*. More likely *hirid* is an error for *hir* and two related comparisons run over three lines.
- 4422 *werly*: cf. *KQ* 1085, st. 155.
- 4433-34 Although most of the wishes occupy two lines, these two lines seem to augment the previous two rather than to contain a new wish.
- 4441-42 S&D (corrigenda) suggest that *with* is an error for *within*. Here he again varies the structure, substituting a *lijk* construction for *as . . . as*.
- 4447 By itself the line is difficult, but the following two lines explain it: they would be alike in *parage* ("worth, nobility") if he were as noble as she is generous.
- 4468 the *gret vnsoft*: cf. 1454 and *HF* 36.
- 4472 *creature*: an unrecorded use; the word was probably chosen for the rhyme (for a similar construction, cf. 5279).
- 4476 This sudden turn reminds the reader that the purpose of his retreat is to assuage his grief, a purpose he has plainly not achieved.
- 4480-81 Here the poet once again suggests the link between poetry and music

in referring to the little poems that follow as “symple” dances.

4483 is for yow go: S&D gloss “? is being fetched for yow” (OED, s.v. go 58b [only citation 1594]); Charles uses *for* to mean “from” in 1686, however, and it is just possible that the reference is to the removal of tables for dancing *after* the “spice” and wine is served at the conclusion of the banquet. Wine and sweets were customarily served at the very end of the meal or after some after-dinner amusements (cf. *SqT* 291ff.; *LGW* 1104ff.; Skeat, *Works*, 2.506, also 5.266; MED, s.v. spice 1b: *Ponthus* 15). Even today in the north of England *spice* may refer to gingerbread, sweetmeats, dried fruit, currant cake, etc. (Wright, s.v. spice).

For a more detailed description of a banquet much like this one, also drawn from a courtly poem, see Machaut’s *Remede*: the noble company enjoys dinner followed by music, dancing, and games such as chess and tables. Then a knight calls for wine and spices (“le vin et les especes”), which the squires hasten to provide. That finished, it is 3:00 P.M., and time for the guests to depart (Wimsatt and Kibler, lines 3909–4020). See also *MerchT* 1765–70; *SqT* 283–96.

4485 Here the banquet proper ends. The miscellaneous lyrics or carols that occupy 4486–4637 are the “sympil” dances he recommends to his guests in 4480–81. For another courtly banquet followed by dancing, see *LBD*. Nineteen blank lines between this section and the “dances” that follow may well have been left for decoration.

4487 S&D label the following poems as “caroles,” but the term should probably apply only to those beginning in line 4569 (Champion likewise labels the Fr equivalents of 4569–4637 as “caroles”). Inasmuch as the banquet and the entertainment which follow are transparent metaphors for a body of texts, and the narrator explicitly refers to “daunce[s]” that follow, it would be reasonable to expect lyrics that derive from dance forms, such as the virelay (or possibly the carol, such as the retainers of the God of Love dance in *RR*, 727ff.; cf. the *carolez* danced after supper in *Sir Gawain* 1026 and 1655). See Greene on both forms (lv–lvii).

4487–4504 This minimalist lyric bears comparison with Christine de Pisan’s rondeau: “Dieux / Est. / Quiex? / Dieux. / Cieulx / Plaist / Dieux” (Wilkins, 92; Roy, 1.185).

4502 See 947n.

4505 S&D seem to read 4505–4552 as constituting three poems, but (even though each begins with a two-line letter and is accorded its own MS page) the sense seems to indicate a single three-stanza poem, just as 4487–4504 does (note, e.g., the use of *For* in 4521). Perhaps Charles intended a series of three three-part poems (“dances”) in ascending order of complexity (with the poem beginning in 4553 coming between the second and third, perhaps in the voice of the narrator/host?). Each of these “verse pieces” is preceded by a few blank lines, for reasons unknown (see Introduction, “Scribal Layout of the Roundels”).

4535 greve: for rhyme cf. 3427: *greveleve*.

4547 turne and lye: the image of the suffering lover who has taken to his bed

is only implied, in keeping with the extreme brevity of the poem.

4553 *tyre*: silk, originally from the city of Tyre. Inasmuch as the poet repeatedly mentions *kerchers*, *keverkopes*, and such, it is not unreasonable to suppose that this "pece of tyre" is a similar bit of cloth with romantic associations (see 4557)—perhaps a gift from his lady. The poem may well have been composed for an occasion.

4557 *feure white*: Cf. Gower *CA* 6.239–49 (see also *Clanvowe*, line 41n).

4559 The image here may be of a man "drunk on love," *formasid* by too large a *draught* of amorous pleasure.

4569 In the Fr version the lover complains to *Merencolie*, not Fortune. Richard Leighton Green, in discussing "The Carol as Dance-Song," emphasizes repeatedly the alternation of burden and refrain as characteristic of the carol and discusses Charles of Orleans' "carols" as "artificial and literary," without refrains. (These poems have no headings in the MS; the label is editorial. They do indeed have refrains, but severely truncated ones.) Green says of the carol, "the conventions of courtly love touch it hardly at all" (*English Carols*, xliii–lv).

4570 *ye*: the scribe has written *yow* in error.

4575–76 *is*: apparently an error for *nis*.

Fr: Mais nul bien n'en puis avoir

Dont mon cueur est presque mort.

4591 *my n affyaunce*: trusty companion; in apposition to *Hope*. Hope is an advancing warrior, aiding the lover to free the heart from prison (4610).

4603 It is unclear in all of these carols whether the refrain line should be written out or left in the abbreviated form of the manuscript.

4604 *Parde*: the guide letter is clearly a *p*, but the context suggests that perhaps it ought to read *Tarde*, "tardily."

Fr: Vous lui avez fait promesse.

4609 *go*: the word is not used transitively in ME.

4618–21 I invite correction of my paraphrase (4619 might be taken as parenthetical?). This quatrain varies significantly from the Fr, which is simpler and more positive:

Espoir m'a dit que Leauté

Vous fera souvenir de moy,

Car vostre bonne volenté

Ne peut faillir, comme je croy.

Charles has obviously recast the relationships, referring to the lover's rather than the lady's loyalty and projecting a lady who is disdainful.

4637 In my view, this marks the end of the second major division of the work (the dream of Age, the withdrawal from Love's service, and the Jubilee), which separates the two love affairs. The third section is made up of the vision of Venus and Fortune, the encounter with the new lady, and the second ballad sequence.

4638 Fifteen lines at the top of this leaf were left blank, perhaps for decoration.

4641–43 *ydill thought*: Cf. 193–94 and *BD* 4.

hertis: lovers. Just as Idleness keeps the gate of Guillaume de Lorris's Garden of Mirth, so the idleness of Charles's narrator is the perfect state of mind in which to encounter Venus (the "occupation" of the banquet having done him little good).

Camargo calls this episode (preceding the dream vision) "rather gratuitous" (105). It is, on the contrary, essential for a variety of reasons: it shows the narrator continuing to deceive himself in thinking that he is writing poems that are not born out of his own emotional state; it provides the setting for and triggers the vision that follows; and it highlights the idea of Fortune's stableness, the concept that epitomizes the work.

4650–54 The phenomenon of asking another to express one's love in poetic form is not uncommon in medieval literature (and life as well); Machaut's narrator in *FA* is asked to send a "lay or complaint" to the nobleman's lady on his behalf (1501–4). Robbins cites a rubric to one of Lydgate's lyrics that indicates it was composed for the use of a "squyer" ("Court Love Lyric," 210).

4657 S&D take *loue* as an error for *low*.

4668–69 Chaucer's House of Fame, made of beryl (3.1184–85), sits on a *roche* that is shiny and clear as *alum de glas* (3.1125–25).

4670 a benche of mosse & gras: a garden seat (built of earth, topped with carefully-trimmed grass, sometimes moss, and tiny flowers, held in place by wooden boards, wattle, or brick) was common in medieval and Renaissance gardens. For a short discussion and a series of illustrations see Crisp, 1.81–83, "Turfed Mounds and Turf-Topped Benches Used for Seats," and vol. 2, Figs. 114–134; More hears of the wonders of Utopia while seated on such a turfed bench. What is obviously unusual about this "mossy bench" is that it is built, not in a garden, but on a cliff overlooking the sea (cf. *FkT* 902, where the garden "ther bisyde" is often spoken of by readers as near the seashore and Dorigen's castle, but is elsewhere in the tale described as "yond, at swich a place" [1326 and 1489], and lies on the other side of town from the castle [1502]). Turfed benches are mentioned in *LGW*, F.204 and in *F&L*, 50–53. On this setting, see Introduction, "Themes and Conventions."

4673–76 I had to plan it carefully since (1) it had to be done and (2) I have difficulty writing intricate verse (a good joke). Cf. *HF* 245–48:

What shulde I speke more queynte,

Or peyne me my wordes peynte

To speke of love? Hyt wol not be;

I kan not of that faculte.

as . . . that: both are redundant (as is *as* in 4670).

4678–79 The progression "seide," "sprede," "wrote" would seem to imply either that *seide* is simply used to mean "composed" or, perhaps more likely, that the poet first composed it by saying it over and over out loud until he had it the way he wanted it and only then spread out his paper and wrote it down.

4680–4735 The lyric the narrator writes is a double ballade with envoy. Those

- readers familiar with the narrator's *complainte* on Fortune in Machaut's *Remede* (and the advice of *Esperance* that follows) will see how this *complaynt* plays off that more traditional view. Cecily Clark notes a similar motif in Charles's Rondeau CCXIII, where Fortune is described as "tousjours une" ("Perspectives," 258; see also Introduction, "Title of the Poem," and "Sources and Influences: Gower"). The ballade functions here as a *mise en abyme*, in the definition of William Calin, "a literary or artistic structure contained within a larger narrative whole which reflects, repeats, glosses, and/or anticipates the thematic concerns or esthetic processes of the whole" ("Medieval Intertextuality," 3).
- 4685 *symplesse*: another reference to his state of ignorance in his youth when he first became acquainted with Love. "Whereas" cannot introduce a statement of fact in contrast to that of the main clause; the poet says that Fortune is unchanging: she has always been hostile to the narrator.
- 4691 a *sympill wight*: *don* is to be understood before this phrase from the following line.
- 4701 *bi* seems to have been omitted after *ordaynyd*.
- 4705-6 Octosyllabic. The image of Charles of Valois, son of Louis of Orleans, complaining, in the person of his foolish narrator, that Fortune has given him an unpolished simplicity coupled with a "tobisy demenyng" is rich.
- 4712 *now were me wondir wise*: S&D gloss: "(?) defend me wondrously." The poet is attempting to flatter Fortune by attributing wisdom or prudence to her and suggesting that her best course of action is to give him what he wants.
- 4718 S&D print *in noyouslesse*, read *in noyous lese*, and gloss: "you feed me in - evil pasture" (Cf. *T&C* 2.752). The poet probably did write *in noyous lese*, but a charge that suits Fortune better is: "you harrass me with painful deceits" (cf. 1407n and *LGW* 1545). The scribe picked up the wrong spelling of the ending from *redresse* in the previous line and consequently joined the two words. The three rhymes in this stanza, *-ise* [i:z], *-ese* [e:z], *-esse* [es], do require scribal care.
- 4724 *an hire*: the scribe has written *am hir* in error. The correction would also rectify the rhyme (Daunt, 139).
- 4733 *truse*: according to OED, first recorded as a verb ("truce") in 1569. Ralph Hanna suggests "truss up" (see OED, s.v. *truss* 1b, first use 1394).
- 4739 S&D suggest, probably for reasons of meter, that *soth* may have been omitted following *all be hit*; but cf. *WBT* 1172: "Al were it that myne auncestres were rude."
- 4741 *sevyn*: "sleep"; OED records no form without *-w-*; MED records the form here and in 6412 as possible errors (cf. 4759 and note Charles's use of *tayne/twayne*).
- 4742 *evyn*: S&D call its final position un-English. The rhyme is masculine.
- 4747-48 *Fully*: Owen and Owen read "folly" (but print *Filly*): "So it is not, in my opinion, any folly to pay attention to them." Read as *fully*, the word order is no stranger here than elsewhere in this work.
- 4755-57 The narrator falls asleep on the bench that stands on the cliff. The

rocky cliff stands on the headland or high place at the shore which extends out over the sea. These details give the reader a sense of height and wildness (so uncharacteristic of the love vision) as well as a momentary sense of heightened reality. (In *Ballade LXXV* Charles mentions "Dovre sur la mer," and he may have had such a site in mind in composing this passage.) At the same time, the sea must evoke the idea of Fortune, who will soon appear and play a decisive role in the narrator's future (cf. 1043, *TB* 2543-45, and Introduction, "Setting"). Note that the setting is identical in his waking and in his sleeping states.

4760 Cf. Chaucer's Venus in *HF* 128-37 and *KnT* 1955-62 (the astrological Venus), and *PF* 260-73. Lydgate says of Venus's *cote*: "men myghte se / Hir shappe through-out, so was hit maked, / Lych as she had in soth be naked" (*R&S* 1563ff.).

4761 were: a pronunciation current in the fifteenth century makes it a sound rhyme with *there* (cf. 4976).

4762 Cf. *PF* 237-38.

4764 Kercher of *plesauce* (Fr: "couvrechief de plaisance"): the veil of pleasure. As in line 404 and elsewhere, the poet puns on the name of a fine lawn made originally in Piacenza (Charles's use of *plesauce* generally implies both desire and its satisfaction). The play on *plesauce* was popular in the fifteenth century. (For some idea of how very sheer such cloth could be woven in the late Middle Ages, see, e.g., Scott, color pl. 10 and 11.)

A *kercher* (rather than, e.g., a *vayle*) was by definition a head-covering (see Piponnier, 74 and *passim*), though it could also be used to wipe the face, bind up a wound, etc. (cf. 4344). Lydgate's Venus, for instance, wears a chaplet of roses, "for kerchef pleylnly had she non" (*R&S* 1575). The use of a head-covering as a "loin cloth" is intentionally remarkable. It is therefore a good guess that Charles took the term from Chaucer's *PF*, in which Venus is dressed similarly to his own goddess (269-73). As usual, Charles borrows but does not imitate; he replaces *Valence* with *plesauce*, a word and a place-name which offers better opportunities for word play. (On the veil as an attribute of Venus—and of Fortune—see de Tervarent, s.v. *voile*.)

4765 owl: see Introduction, "Allegorical Figures." Lydgate lists birds known for "here falshed & here doubilnesse . . . Iayis, Pyis, Lapwyngis & these Oulys" (*TG*, 21). Nor is the owl accordant with beauty: in the reverse anatomizing of a lady, one poet says she is "Most fresch of contenance, euyng as an Oule" ("Vnto you," 6, Robbins, *Secular Lyrics*, 219-20; see also Le Roux de Lincy, 114: "On ne peut faire d'un hybou un espervier"). Venus is appropriately accompanied by doves (as here) or sparrows.

4766 owt more suffisaunce: though unattested, the phrase must mean that this *Venus Marina* floated toward the dreamer on the surface of the water "without any other support" (or means of conveyance); Venus's usual means of transport is the scallop shell. Perhaps it is an unconscious acknowledgement that her mode of transport *was* mysterious, her shell having been transformed, due to a medieval error in transmission, into the

- shell she is often portrayed carrying (see Twycross, 18–22). Fortune, in contrast, arrives in a chariot.
- 4767–68 Owen and Owen translate, “I seemed to wake up”; but the dreamer is only commenting on the dream: it seemed to be real.
- 4770 Charles keeps his reader in suspense for a full twenty-five lines before revealing that the lady is Venus.
- 4773 Wearisome because she travels over the cold sea, without adequate clothing. Owen and Owen comment on the narrator’s “graceful wit and innocent boldness” (413), but both his gallant concern and his rhetoric are foolishly out of place here.
- 4777–78 The enjambment of this stanza into the next is a brilliant stroke. In the earlier stanza the lover is courtliness personified. The stanza ends mid-sentence, halfway through an offered kiss, and after the pause occasioned by the end of the stanza, the new stanza presents us with a picture of an angry goddess. The narrator’s initial greeting and offer of a kiss is a faux pas of the first order. He realizes this only when he finally recognizes Venus in line 4794.
- 4779 *nys* . . . as *purse* is of an *ay*: see 4193n.
- 4781 The lover, foolishly, cannot decide. Owen and Owen attribute *No* to Venus (and split the responses in other cases, as well), but the response of the narrator is typical of him, and there is no reason for Venus to insist that he recognizes her—or Fortune (cf. 2552–62, 5102–3, 5109).
- 4782–83 The fact that the meter runs properly suggests that there is no unintended repetition in *who* . . . *who* in 4783. Perhaps related to Lean’s proverb, “Poor men and idiots are ever the most confident and bold” (4.84). This proverbial passage probably has no relation to that alluded to in *SqT* 491 (to beat the dog before the lion; Morawski, 1669). In any case his response serves to show that it is the last thing the narrator is expecting to hear, and the tenor of the statement (together with the expression in 4779) characterizes Venus as uncourtly and lacking in the severe dignity of Cupid.
- 4786 *where*: Daunt explains that this pronunciation (sp. *ware*, rhymes *are*) is a common Northernism (138). Cf. 5712. *How* should apparently read *thow*.
- 4788–89 The original rhyme forms were probably *deverelere* (S&D). If, as they suggest, the narrator’s *deyuure* to Venus is the writing of the roundels, it is also a statement by the poet that he will continue to write love poetry, and it recalls Geoffrey’s writings in the service of Venus, Cupid, Love, and the servants of love in *HF* (614–28). Both poets are rewarded for their services. On the other hand, the use of the future is odd if it refers to the roundels we have just read. Owen and Owen take *deyuure* as a reference to the chant royal the narrator has just written and translate: “I thank you for your service . . . that you shall perform for such as are my servants.”
- 4790 *ye*: the scribe apparently first wrote *y shulde*, then went back and added a very narrow *e*.
- 4798 The meter suggests that *symplesse* should be *symplenessse*.

- 4801 Cf. the encounter of Gower's lover with Venus (*CA* 1.148ff.).
- 4802 Geoffrey in *HF* also lives as "an heremyte" in the service of Love (659), though for different reasons. The image is not uncommon.
- 4805-4812 strike: cf. *FrT* 1364.
- Blue was, of course, the color of constancy, for which the narrator has no use since the death of his lady (cf. 1153-54); it was also a kind of cloth (Stafford blue, blue of Ypres, etc.). *Rosett* probably involves word play on the color rose (which is appropriate for a lover) and russet cloth (though a lover would never actually wear such rough cloth). S&D associate the *rosette* with *RR*, and it is the color, apparently, of the heart in 4808. The figurative meaning of *tawny* probably comes from the *Fr* word *tanner*: "fatiguer, ennuyer, tourmenter." Cecily Clark suggests that this word play, which also occurs in *R XXXIX* but is otherwise unattested in *ME*, provides some evidence that both poems are written by the same author (259 and n.). A. E. B. Coldiron has provided me with a collection of sixteenth-century references associating forsaken lovers with tawny, taken from the *Paradise of Daintie Devices*, ed. Rollins. Apparently Charles thought his audience would understand the connotations of the color. *Tawny* can also refer to a kind of cloth (OED, s.v. tawny B2). The stanza is constructed on a play on the socially recognized connotations of four colors (black, blue, rose/russet, tawny), of which the last three involve triple word play: the color, its connotation, and a name for a kind of cloth.
- 4813 With this question, Venus gets straight to the heart of the matter. The whole point of the lover's retirement to the Castle of No Care was to soothe his pain, to cure him of love's malady, and ultimately to make him forget his misery. Reed treats this dialogue briefly in his chapter on the Middle English debate tradition (164).
- 4815 *bidyng*: the meter would allow for *place* after *bidyng* (cf. 1518). His vital misstep in the argument that follows is his admission at the outset that he does not, in fact, dwell in No Care, the only safe refuge from love. Instead, he mourns for his dead lady, thinking of her constantly. This makes Venus's strategy of causing his transference of his affections to a new lady considerably easier. This passage shows a marked difference from his state on first entering No Care "ioyfull at hert" (3001).
- 4816-21 Cf. *BD* 595-97.
- 4818 to and to: S&D list this under "Uses" in their introduction (xliii) and gloss "side by side."
- 4822-43 The lover apparently treats his retirement to the Castle of No Care a bit like hotel living, returning when he pleases (which is often) to the places where his love affair took place. Influenced by Troilus's recital of his memories of Criseyde (5.565-81), Charles presents a lover who is a bit more specific and concrete than his Trojan predecessor. The *when* clause of 4822-26 has no resolution.
- 4825 *aundir*: this may be an eccentric spelling of *yondir*, or (more likely) it is a slip by the scribe who copied *an/au* from the previous word but did not go back to correct it, simply adding four more letters.

- 4829 S&D suggest *aslepe* or *on slepe*, but the cadence of the line (and the absence of *And*) suggests that it is headless.
- 4830 *lorche* [rhymes *worche/chirche*]: a version of the medieval game of tables (see 1629n and Murray, "Tables," 61, 65).
- 4834 This game of Post and Pillar followed by the narrator's profession of love is mirrored precisely in the events of the narrative section that follows the dream, in which the narrator meets the new lady (5198ff.).
- 4835 The poet's use of "so" indicates that the game of Post and Pillar was known as a game associated with *luf-talkyng*; see 5227n and Introduction, "Courtly Occupations: Post and Pillar."
- 4840 This passage certainly gives the reader a very different idea of the relationship of these two than could be gleaned from the first ballade sequence. Thomas W. Ross in his investigation of taboo-words in fifteenth-century English finds that *pappis* was an inoffensive word in the late Middle Ages and that Scots such as Henryson and Dunbar associated it with descriptions of gentle ladies (151-52).
- 4851 *riche*: probably a scribal error for *riches*, "treasure" (i.e., my lady, making *thoughtis* the possessive); otherwise *hit* in the following line has no (singular) referent. Death is the thief.
- The narrator remembers many things, including that she died in a certain bed; he stops just short of saying he was actually present at his lady's death (and it is pretty unlikely that he would have been).
- 4853 *smokke*: again the narrator speaks in strikingly concrete terms, this time naming a piece of intimate apparel.
- 4854 *shift*: (ME *shiht*; not given in MED; OED first use 1598) Though they give "?shift" in their glossary, S&D suggest "sheath," which is not attested as an article of clothing in the fifteenth century. (Their statement that the phrase "painted sheath" referred to clothing in the Tudor period is not quite accurate, esp. in light of Hieron 1613: "thy painted sheath and gay clothing" [OED, s.v. sheath 1d]). Chaucer uses *shethe* figuratively in *Scogan* 39, but the metaphor is clearly of the holder for a knife (which can rust). To call her smock a lady's "scabbard" does not seem especially apt. S&D find more likely the reading "sight," referring back to *thoughtis riche* in 4851 (the spelling *syhte* is recorded in OED; the *sh-* is completely anomalous). MED (suggesting that *shiht* is an error for *sight*) gives "The visual cognizance (of sb. or sth.), view; also, an instance of such cognizance, a visual perception; also *fig.*" Being unsure how the lines would then run, I have opted for "shift."
- 4857 Cf. *LBD* 639-40.
- 4858 His "service" is to think constantly of the joy he had in serving his lady.
- 4864 Kissing the walls of the saint's cell, treating an object (even a stolen one) with veneration, and using loaded words like *professioun*, *ancre*, and *contemplatijf*, all play on devotion to God and devotion to (the memory of) the lady. Venus, of course, has no use for such "holiness."
- 4866 *wherof serue y*: cf. *AL* 15.

bete the ground: this proverbial expression takes many forms: "beat the air

(water),” “fight against the wind” (cf. Lyd *TB* 3.771.7086–89); cf. Cotgrave, s.v. *batre*: “*Batre l'eau. To loose his labour, or employ his time to no purpose.*”

4867 *vnto*: the preposition (in place of *of*) is unusual in this context.

4869 “Remembrestow that thow art a man?” (*Bo* 1.pr6.55–56). The tenor of Venus’s inquiry is markedly different from that of Philosophy. Whereas Philosophy was trying to show Boethius that he was a *rational* animal (made in the image of God), Venus attempts to show the lover that he is a human *animal* and so ought to follow the nature of animals. In *Les Ésches Amoureux* it is Pallas who warns the lover that he is in danger (from listening to Venus and the God of Love), reminding him that “God has made man higher than the beasts of the field and reason should rule him”; as the lover of the *RR* does, the narrator proceeds to defend both deities (Galpin, 290).

4871 *employ it*: S&D assume that the pronoun refers to the narrator’s life (4862). A much closer referent would be *lymys*, i.e., genitals. The poet’s use of the singular pronoun supports this meaning (ME *lim* is often used in the singular, and Charles is frequently careless with number). The poet surely intended the ambiguity. Cf. *WBT* 115–34.

Venus and Nature are commonly allied under the banner of procreation. J. A. W. Bennett points out that the atmosphere in Chaucer’s *PF* grows “more sultry, more sinister, and at the same time more voluptuous” as we move from the domain of Cupid to that of Venus (91–92). Charles, too, makes clear distinctions between the (overlapping) realms of the God and Goddess of Love. Cupid is the god of erotic illusion while Venus stands for the erotic force (see Lewis, *Allegory*, 121).

4879 *as*: completes *as wel* in 4876.

4881 in *yowre arme*: cf. *MilT* 3405: “She sholde slegen in his arm al nyght.”

4883 S&D gloss *say*, “try” (corrigenda).

4884 The ex-lover’s outrage at Venus’s suggestion is reminiscent of *Amant*’s taking Reason to task for her frankness in *RR* (6928ff.).

4890 The rhetoric echoes that of the narrator’s other encounter with Venus in B 70 (The envoy contains the same extreme dolefulness). It is likely that that ballade contains the seeds of this full-blown allegory, including Venus’s “half” a smile (2403), her addressing him as “my frend,” and her offer to solve his problems. He in turn laments the loss of his lady to death. The “ofcast creature” echoes the refrain of B 59, and 4892–93 echo 2584–85.

4897 *toy*: though the phrase might be taken as “foolish fancy,” my guess is that Venus is once again being sarcastic, referring to the “amorous sport” of the grave (see OED, s.v. *toy* 1 and preceding note).

4899 *paynt*: MED, citing this line, glosses “feign,” “deceive.” Much better is 6b (cited for line 2956): “give a false appearance, disguise, color (one’s words)”; the reference is to the colors of rhetoric. Venus is referring to her own manner of expressing herself: she holds nothing back.

4905 If she were as wonderful as her reputation seemed to proclaim, you

- would have wanted to take a new lady—an odd sort of argument.
- 4908 for a sy: S&D and Daunt (151) agree in glossing the word “spot” or “stain,” citing Wright, s.v. *sie* (where, in addition, “sieless” is glossed “stainless, unblemished”). OED (s.v. *sy* sb2 2) gives the same meaning (from 1781). S&D add the suggestion that it is an error for *fy*.
- 4912 it: apparently superfluous (?perhaps some kind of confused impersonal construction).
- 4923 Cf. *T&C* 1.1.
- 4931 goth . . . to: “to betake oneself to (an employment or occupation),” OED, s.v. *go* 34.
- 4934–35 he vsith fillith of change: the behavior of hypothetical lovers in these two lines should logically contrast, but “abundance of fickleness” (S&D) and “flattery” are not opposite. *Fillith* [*filth*] is “vile speech” (cf. *Rom* 7527–30: “Fayr-Welcomyng in prison is, / That ofte hath played with you, er this, / The fayrest games that he coude, / Withoute fylthe, styлле or loude”). Both *fillith* (in this context foul only because it tries to mask inconstancy) and flattery (in a positive sense) are thus forms of speech, as well as approximate opposites.
- 4939 ye make a gret perail: the phrase surely means “you are making a great fuss” (?you act as if it were a great risk), but no such meaning for *perail* is attested in Fr or E. S&D gloss “preparation.”
- 4941–52 Octosyllabic. S&D suggest the omission of *so* in 4942 to improve the meter.
- 4946 where: repeated in 4953, 4960, for which use see Mustanoja, 338.
- 4948 The advice could be phrased in many ways; Venus is telling him to calculate what he would like to achieve before using his observation of other peoples’ tactics to show him how to reach his goal.
- 4960 Cf. 2668.
- 4962–63 Cf. 5133–34. Echoes Criseyde’s speech to Diomedes: “it happen may, / That whan I se that nevere yit I say, / Than wol I werke that I nevere wroughte!” (*T&C* 5.991–93); but the expression is proverbial: “Quand les yeux voyent ce qu’ils ne virent oncques, le coeur pense ce qu’il ne pensa oncques” (Cotgrave, s.v. *Oeil*).
- 4965 The figure of Fortune in the *Morte Arthure* likewise descends “downe fra the clowddez” wearing a “surcott of sylke” covered with gems, etc. (3250ff.).
- 4967 The line is unconnected to the sentence grammatically, but it explains why the chariot was so wondrous.
- 4973 Fortune was usually represented as a queen in the Middle Ages and was often represented riding in a chariot. For a discussion of the figure of Fortune, see Introduction, “Allegorical Figures.” Cf. Chaucer’s *Fame* in *HF* 1361–1418.
- 4977 S&D suggest that *but* may be a scribal error for *by*, but *but* may be used to introduce an emphatic statement, while *very God* may stand alone. *nyse*: MED cites this line and glosses “foolish, absurd, senseless, mistaken”; in this context the word means “extraordinary.”

- 4977-78 Here the narrator emphasizes the dual nature of his vision: it is both miraculous and realistic (see Introduction, "Fortune").
- 4979-80 Cf. *KQ* 1114-15, st. 160: "And ane surcote sche werit long that tyde / That semyt to me of diuerse hewis." Lydgate's Juno (*R&S* 1392) also wears a surcoat of many colors, richly set with stones. His Mercury wears a rich robe "Whos colour, sothly, was nat stable / But dyuers, and variable, / And of mony sondry hewe: / Chaungyng alwey newe and newe" (lines 1725-28); his Cupid is similarly clothed (lines 5340ff.). Such changeable robes were common in the language of allegory.
- 4981-83 body: though later to mean "bodice," in this context it would seem to be a more inclusive term meaning all the parts of the dress which cover the body, as distinct from the arms (OED, s.v. body 6) and would be more or less synonymous, then, with *surcot*. The "playtis" or folds would then be of the lower part of the "body" below the hips (or "skirt").
 thorough & thorough: usually means the same as in ModE, but he seems in this context to mean "all over." Jewels were usually limited to a row of *besants* down the front of the surcoat, but the *Morte Arthure* contains a description of Fortune as a duchess dressed in a "surcott of sylke fulle selkouthely hewede," with "Bruchez and besauntez and oþer bryghte stonys / . . . / Hir bake and hir breste was brochede all ouer" (lines 3250-57). Such garments are to be found in medieval illuminations. For a description of actual fifteenth century jewelled garments, see Evans, 67. I am grateful to Roger Wieck for help in sorting out many of the details of Fortune's costume.
 as (4982): more usually *with*.
- 4984 arayse: present tense is used for preterite to suit the rhyme. Linguistically, it is difficult to see how the folds could "rise" up "and down." The poet's need for a rhyme may have overridden that for sense. S&D suggest that the intended rhyme might have been either *balayse/arayse/wayes* or *balise/arise/wise*; Daunt explains the rhyme as a Northernism (148). The idea is that, as Fortune moves, the folds of her garments move in such a way that the eye sees the blue of the sapphire change into the red/purple of the ruby and back again. The many different kinds of movement described create an esthetically pleasing but bewildering show of color and splendor.
- 4986-87 purpil: a color name which, from classical times through the Middle Ages, denoted color ranging from red, through purple, to blue (see Planché, 198). The Purple Heart, given to American soldiers wounded in combat, recalls this traditional ambiguity.
- 4988-94 S&D gloss MS *forgoth*, "is outstanding" (perhaps suggested by OED, s.v. forgo 3b obs. rare "to overreach, deceive" [1382 Wycliff]; see MED, s.v. forgon 4b). The scribe seems to have taken the word as *forgo*, but it is probably an error for *forgeth*, "counterfeits." MED cites no instance with *of*, but perhaps the preposition belongs with *substance*.
 pynche: MED cites only this line and glosses "pleated fabric? pleating?"; according to the OED a "pinch" is a pleat or gather (s.v. pinch 8).

Perhaps the word should be *pynches* or *pynched*. Scott has suggested that the word may be a form of the word "pinked," since "the linearity of true pleating . . . is alien to French or British taste at the time of Charles d'Orleans" (private correspondence).

The grammar of this passage is difficult, though the meaning is fairly clear: just as genuine ermine is generally decorated with (black tips of ermine) tails, so this "counterfeit ermine" (perhaps intended to suggest Fortune's untrustworthy nature) is made of finely pleated lawn powdered with eyes (Scott calls tears embroidered on clothing "a fairly common conceit among lovers," 97). It is difficult to envision finely pleated lawn which could counterfeit ermine, except in its whiteness and perhaps its soft contours, but this is apparently the idea. The poet does not specify where the ermine is to be found, but "open" surcoats (which is probably what this is) were often trimmed along the edge of the great openings or arm-holes (sometimes around the hem as well). Rarely the entire upper part of the garment was trimmed with ermine.

4996-97 The figure of Fortune in James I's *KQ* likewise wears a "surcote . . . of diuerse hewis" and a copious mantle "large and long"; it is her mantle, rather than her surcoat, that is furred with ermine with its black spots (1114-22, st. 160-61; this is common in representations of Fortune). There were many ways of fastening mantles in the Middle Ages, including drawing silken cords (often gold, with tassels) many times through rings attached to the fabric. Houston lists the popularity of full and voluminous draperies as one of the leading features of early fifteenth century dress (163).

- Such fabric is described in Fr as *changeant* and is called shot silk in E (Piponnier, 114-16, 382; OED, s.v. shot). Planché claims that the technique of weaving two colors together, one warp and one weft, was used as early as the seventh century in England (s.v. Purple). For more detail, see Dodwell, whose description explains why representations of this kind of silk in medieval illuminations appear to be powdered with gold flecks (145-50).

5002 *tissew*: a rich kind of cloth, often silk interwoven with gold or silver, not necessarily diaphanous in texture; *tissew* was used for hangings and in garments where more heavily-woven materials would be more appropriate. We are probably to imagine cloud shapes (as well as moons, 5007) woven into the cloth, perhaps with metallic thread (or perhaps embroidered or appliqued). Such brocaded materials are typical of the period before 1420 (see Scott, chap. 4, and Gradon, 344 n. 2).

5003 *there & here*: inverted for rhyme (cf. 5012).

5005 In the inventory of 1389 of the house of Orleans, a "chambre de drap asur" is said to be brocaded with the rays of the sun across the sky (Graves, no. 135, 72).

5006-7 *worst*: Charles perhaps provided an exemplar to his scribe which was unclear at this point. The word, which is clearly written in the manuscript, is certainly some form of the word *wrought* (*worft*, *worht*, *worzt*, *wrost*). The

last of these spellings is used by Revisor B in the following line, and Charles uses *wrofft* in line 3288 [rhyming with *thou3t/ought*]. (Neither OED nor MED lists any spellings with *s* in place of *f*.)

Such a garment need not be thought wholly a product of the poet's fantasy; Richard I apparently had a mantle which was "ornamented with half-moons of solid silver, and nearly covered with shining orbs, in imitation of the system of the heavenly bodies" (Fairholt, 102). The deleted line, "some of them wholly full, a very marvellous sight," introduces a third phase of the moon (it would be impossible to represent the fourth, the new moon). The poet apparently felt that waxing and waning moons were sufficient, and this image fits in with other dual images of Fortune's nature.

othir some: see Mustanoja, 212.

5008 Cf. *T&C*: "Wait . . . upon the chaungynge of the moone / Whan lightles is the world a nyght or tweyne" (3.549–50).

5011–15 ron: continuous ornamental embroidery used as a border on garments is called *renninge orfrais*. The border of the cloak is evidently decorated with a rose pattern in which the roses alternate from side to side along a snaking golden stem (on *sprede*, cf. *BlkKn* 31–34).

Some of the leaves would be fastened (applied or embroidered) to the garment, while others would hang loose and flutter with every movement; both kinds were decorated with exquisite pearls. "The almost ragged appearance of [dagged edging] could be complemented by literally thousands of tiny gold or silver plaques or bells hanging from one *houppel-ande*. Raising an arm, or taking a step, would have caused the slashed edges to move, each piece hanging slightly differently, while the metalwork ensured that every movement caused a musical clinking" (Scott, 83; see also 87–88, illus. 86, and the border of the mantle the king wears on 92).

The grammar of these lines is not as "loose" as S&D suggest. The "pei" of 5014 could refer to either the roses or the leaves or both.

5016–17 so playn . . . so smothe: while it is difficult to see the difference between these two qualities, one is clearly intended (cf. *Lyd BlkKn* 50: "the soyle was pleyn, smothe and wonder soft"). In this case "playn" may signal a contrast with the three-dimensional effect of the leaves just described (cf. 1040), and "smothe" may refer to the fineness of the material; or perhaps Charles had in mind *Fr plain*, "of one color," contrasting with the many colors of the surcoat and the outside of the mantle. The form of *prately* would imply that these are adverbs, but they may be intended as adjectives modifying *hynyng*. On the interchangeability of adjectives and adverbs, see Mustanoja, 314, 648–50.

5017–44 The octosyllabic line suits this kind of description well.

5019–20 soven: Littré gives the full name of the flower as *souvenez-vous-de-moi* (but identifies it, as does the MED, as the forget-me-not). Skeat distinguishes between the *soven* or remember-me (*veronica chamaedrys*, which Littré identifies correctly) and the *ne-m'oublie-pas* or forget-me-not (*myosotis*), but because the names are nearly identical in meaning, confusion

between the two was (and is) probably common. Skeat was commenting on a passage from *AL*: "margarites . . . / . . . were accompanied with mo, / . . . m'oublie-mies & sovenez also; / The poore penses ne were nat disloged there" (*Chaucerian Pieces*, 535 n. 61). S&D seem to suggest that Charles borrowed the references, but it is more likely that he was the source for *AL* (see Pearsall, *Floure and Leafe*, 18, and notes to 61-62, 85-88, 170, 225, 526, 533). Fortune is unmistakably associated with the imagery of love by the decoration of her mantle with roses, remember-me's, daisies, and pansies.

In the inventory of the house of Orleans of 1408 we find "une robe d'escarlante rousée, doublée d'un cendal rouge, brodée toute à rateaux et semée de fleurs de ne m'oubliez mie, sans perles" (Graves, no. 526, 114; see Champion, *Poésies*, gloss., s.v. oblies mie).

pancy: *viola tricolor*, Heart's Ease, Love-in-Idleness; from Fr *pensée*, "thought."

5022 *serpe*: the word is used both of a necklace and of a baldric (OED, s.v. baldric 1), though this *serpe* (OF *éscharpe*) must be the former. S&D describe this neck ornament as a collar, but collars were generally heavy, flat, linked metal ornaments which lay flat against the chest, and it is difficult to match this description with the whirling dice of the text. See following three notes.

5023 *balis*: a "bale" of dice consisted of three die (see Murray, *History of Chess*, 703, and OED, s.v. bale sb.3, 4). The "bales" or sets are *broken*. Perhaps we are to imagine a neck-piece made of a great many unmatched dice. MED gives no instances of *broken* applied to *sets* of things; the first instance cited in OED is 1741.

5024 *fillen out*: "fell"; according to OED, a southern form of the preterite. The word *out* is difficult to explain unless the poet had in mind an expression such as MED (s.v. fillen) quotes from "1400 St. Anne (1) 3292: Full of water þas pottes 3e fille . . . Fyll out of þlykour þat in þaim er." That is, the poet may be suggesting that the dice "pour" or fall as if from a dice cup. Like a moving electric sign, the dice are continually falling (from dice cup to table) but never come to rest. It is also possible that the poet is playing on the phrase "to fall out" meaning "to happen (by chance)."

5025 *avalis*: Charles uses the present for the preterite (*avaled*) here and in the following line. As in many other instances, his need for a rhyme seems to override his need to observe tense or number strictly.

bi lynkis: S&D gloss "in strings." Though necklaces in the modern sense of strings of beads were not worn, this *serpe* (if it is not similar to a livery chain from which metal replicas of various devices were hung, for which see St. John Hope, 313-14) could resemble a choker from which dice on short strings or chains (*lynkis*) are suspended, spoke-like. This arrangement would suit the cut of the surcoat well and would give the dice a chance to whirl about in a fairly orderly fashion (on the latter see *Trés Riches Heures de Jean duk de Berry*, April, and the detail of the St. Omer altarpiece in Scott, color pl. 9).

5028–29 The syntax is loose; this *whi* clause parallels the *how* clause of 5026. *chaunsis*: this may refer to the numbers thrown, perhaps in the game of Hazard (cf. *PardT* 653), but also to one's fortune as predicted by the fall of the dice (cf. *T&C* 2.1347–48). *Chaunsis/verryaunces* is one of Charles's rare feminine rhymes.

5030–32 The waves complement the other natural phenomena represented in Fortune's costume (clouds and moons), but the top edge of the crown is also scalloped as in the commonest popular image of a crown. The *reysyng up* is not (as MED takes from St) a "raised pattern" but simply the place where the crown rises to a point; a fleur-de-lis tops each point. Both meanings (waves and scallops) are surely intended.

Such a crown stands above the porcupine in the insignia of Charles's son, Louis XII, in bas relief carvings that decorate the courtyard of the chateau at Blois (one is just visible in Lesueur, 58). It is unclear why waves should be represented by carbuncles, i.e., by red or fiery-colored stones, but carbuncles were common in crowns. In the opening allegory, the narrator is said to be "de la maison de France, / Creu ou jardin semé de fleur de lis" (lines 166–67).

5035–36 "which spread so as to cover her shoulders." A lady's hair would not ordinarily have been worn loose, but encased in a (golden) net or covered by one of the extravagant headdresses of the day. Only maidens and queens wore their hair loose (Scott, 82). To these categories I would add (depictions of) saints (whether technically virginal or not) and allegorical figures; Fortune is frequently depicted with flowing hair. Like the Green Knight, this lady's hair is quite out of the ordinary; it not only covers her elbows, as the Green Knight's does, but the entire chariot in which she rides.

5039 S&D print *sonne*.

5042 beryl: a transparent stone (in its blue-green form, aquamarine; in its dark green form, emerald), in this case probably pale green, since it resembles glass, with which it is often linked in descriptions (see Lyd *BlkKn* 37). The term *berillus* or *berel* was applied both to this family of stones and to a form of fine crystal, a form which better accords with descriptions of walls and windows made of beryl in other ME poems. Fortune's wheel is often made of glass to emphasize her "brittleness." Chaucer refers to Fortune's gifts as *brutel* in *Bo* 2.pr5, and Troilus laments: "O brotel wele of mannes joie unstable!" (*T&C* 3.820).

5045 S&D gloss *owt rayne* "out-reign"; MED defines as "to reign longer than all others." The phrase is a translation of the Latin mottos frequently found on medieval representations of the Wheel of Fortune: *regnabo* ("I shal rayne"); *regno* ("y rayne"); *regnaui* ("y haue raynyd"); *sum sine regno* ("y owt rayne"). Thus, "I [am] without reign" (I no longer reign). The meter of the line prevents the poet from including the verb. (Cf. "þo Whele of Fortune," line 56, where "þo lowest saies 'withouten regne am I'" [Horstman, 2.71]). Pickering's discussion of Fortune is very useful (168–222), and he includes a number of relevant illustrations, including

- two (8a, 8b) representing the same sort of crowd scene that Charles depicts in this stanza (see also Hussey, 63; *KQ*, st. 159, 163–65).
- 5048 The addition of *some* before *wolde* clarifies the line and improves the meter.
- 5051 goodlynes: “beauty” is the only definition which refers to what is visible.
- 5060–61 Venus has her back to the scene and has not yet seen Fortune or her wheel.
- 5063 she: the scribe has mistakenly written *y*.
- 5068 swete: because it is unlikely that the narrator is addressing Venus with this word (though the sense of the line would run more easily if he were), I would read: “Death would be sweet to me—rather than that I should. . . .”
- 5070 The effects of Fortune are foretold in lines 2615–35, including the suggestion that the narrator’s lady has not really died—an apparent prophecy when he spots a lady he thinks he recognizes on her wheel. For a description of a fifteenth-century Parisian manuscript of Boccaccio’s *Fall of Princes* which is unusual in showing a woman at the top of Fortune’s wheel, see Thorp, plate 12 and MS description no. 54.
- 5072–78 The stanza is written in octosyllables.
- 5073 Goodrich assumes that Venus is correct and the lover has fallen into some kind of second-level dream (*Themes*, 145–46); in fact he is simply transfixed by what has occurred behind the back of Venus (in the same discussion Goodrich misidentifies the object of the narrator’s interest as Fortune herself).
- 5075 St reads *nemene*; the word is *neiuene* (OED *neiuēn*, *neyuen*); MED *neiven* (rhyme: *hevene*, a common rhyme-pair, e.g., *LGW* 2236–37).
- 5080 as it were who: Prins cites as (*he*) *who* as a construction derived from Fr *com cil qui* (59). This seems a conflation of that construction with *as it were*. The scribe was perhaps thinking of the common expression *as who seith* (Mustanoja, 217).
- 5085 bowt: *a-* apparently omitted (cf. 5079, though Charles is fond of aphetic forms); its addition improves the meter. S&D and Owen and Owen gloss *bowt*, “but, only.”
- 5089 The “boch” may be a sidelong reference to Froissart’s *Joli Buisson*, where the narrator hides within a bush of youth (or desire), “inflamed with amorous and poetic passion of a remarkable intensity” (Huot, *From Song to Book*, 317–18)—or it may simply mean “woods.” Cf. *HF* 482ff. On the rhymes see Daunt, 145, 151.
- 5092 Cf. 5281.
- 5095–96 Not logical, but passionately spoken. Owen and Owen read, “Except for my lady, I defy them completely,” but it is not clear how his lady could be included in such a group.
- 5096 Owtseptē: MED records the correction as *Owit*, but it is clearly *Owtt*.
- 5097 An untraced expression, probably not related to the expression that one’s eyes “draw straws” when one is sleepy. If the scribe has bungled the line and *my* is an error (S&D), Venus may simply be saying, “Yea, baw! you have a straw (hull) in your eye!”—that is to say, you do not understand (don’t have a clue). Cf. Cotgrave, s.v. *oeil*: “Busche en l’oeil. [that was]

- a log, or beame in his eye . . . [*that cast*] a mist ouer his vnderstanding." The expression echoes Matt. 7:3 (Luke 6:41).
- 5099 we wymmnen to ben ware: nominative absolute (S&D).
5103-4 See 5140n.
- 5108 and: S&D print *aynd* and gloss "indeed"; Owen and Owen print *ains* and gloss "former." It is probably used here to emphasize the word or phrase following it (see MED, s.v. and 3.): "But is it *really your lady* sitting there?"
- 5109 This is the only case in which Owen and Owen's attribution of the middle of the line ("O nay, no, nyst") to Venus makes good sense, but in light of the other cases of severe indecision on the part of the narrator and of his inability to recognize Age, I think the whole line is spoken rather by the dreamer (see 4781n).
- 5111 hit is not hit: "it is not she"; the construction is one Charles is fond of (see OED, s.v. it 2d, and 5136). The lover's response to the sight accords with "the Ovidian dictum that 'a new love drives out the old'" (Wack, 104).
- 5113 Owen and Owen give the line to the dreamer, which seems to make sense, but he never refers to Venus as *my frend* (nor should he), whereas she addresses him thus in 5173. Venus's humor is dry and ironic throughout.
- 5114-15 She mocks him, calling him a big-time merchant at a great trade fair. (You wouldn't want to have anything to do with a little country market!)
- 5116-18 engros vp: to corner the market by buying up at wholesale prices a certain commodity, with a view to raising the price. She accuses him of planning to buy up a "payre" of ladies: one is his first love; the other is the lady he sees on the wheel ("this same"). Presumably he will "sell off" the less desirable one (or both?) at a later time. She is laughing at him. For a description of such unscrupulous transactions from a sixteenth century source, see Harrison, *Description*, 247-51.
- 5120 See Alford, s.v. *regrater*.
- 5126 The goddess is indulging in a fit of pique. Venus proceeds to advise him, though she said she would not—indeed could not.
as haue y ioy: an asseveration ("as surely as I hope to have eternal bliss").
- 5133-34 Venus is saying "I told you so" (cf. 4962-63). The image of gnawing bones brings to mind the "hond" of 4783 and again points up Venus's lack of formality with the lover.
- 5135 Owen and Owen print "what cast you? love or no?"
- 5136-37 Venus tells the lover again that she wants him in no doubt that it is *not* his lady that he sees. Cf. *HF* 597-98.
- 5140-41 The new is extraordinarily like the old; in fact if it were not so he would not love her (5142). The new lady is the one being referred to in 5143 and 5144. The intricacy of reference in this stanza points up the confusion concerning the two ladies in the mind of the dreamer. Cf. "Complainte de Saint Valentin," in which the bereaved lover is immediately ravished by the sight of a new lady:

Et quant je la viz si tresbelle,
 Si jeune et si bien renomnee, . . .
 J'entray en trop forte pensee,
 Car aucunement ressembloit
 A la belle qu'avoye amee,
 Pour qui mon cueur tant se douloit.

(lines 201–2, 5–8; see Kelly, *Medieval Imagination*, 179–81)

5146–47 A negative seems to have been omitted, probably before *saw* (though the meter seems fine as it stands). Cf. 2923–24.

5154 redles: echoes *rede* of 5138.

5155 His total inability to decide between two alternatives is reminiscent of the problem of Chaucer's knight in *WBT* (lines 1219–26) and his narrator in *PF* (lines 148–54), both of whom, like this narrator, solve the problem by accepting the decision of an authority figure. Note that, having left the service of the God of Love, the narrator does not re-enter it. No (overt) coercion is applied; no oaths are sworn.

5161 Perhaps a conflation of *moche or lite* with *more or lesse* (S&D).

5163 all forgeve: Cf. 6362 and *Anel* 280.

5167 *yon*: the scribe's *any* certainly seems to be the wrong word in this context; S&D suggest that it may be an error for *yon*.

5170 Presumably the veil is still fastened around Venus's loins, her only bit of clothing.

5171 The fact that the lover does not actually reach the lady may be intended as a sign that he will enjoy little success when he actually does meet her. Cf. *KQ*, st. 169–71. For a representation of the climactic moment when the lover reaches the lady (a moment which is comically delayed, then omitted from Charles's poem), see Huot, *From Song to Book*, 178 (the illustration is of the *Roman de la poire*, from B.N. MS. fr. 2186, fol. 2v): the lady, seated atop Fortune's wheel, helps the lover to ascend the last bit of the wheel's curve.

thee: perhaps an error for *yow*, this is Venus's only use of *thee* in addressing the dreamer. Lydgate, too, is inconsistent (*TG* 333ff.; see Mustanoja, 126–28).

5174 The thought of slaying Fortune is clearly absurd, especially in a poem dominated by her influence. Reminiscent of the "riotoures thre" in the *PardT*, the lover reserves his homicidal tendencies in 5178 for his arch-enemy, Death.

5184–87 The lover's flight begins "dredles," but ends quickly in panic. To "cry mercy" is a Gallicism (*crier merci*) but Charles did not introduce it into *E* (Prins, 105).

5191 Lady Philosophy lost some pieces of her robe, too, but Venus has less to lose. As in 4755, there is no clear difference between the worlds of the narrator's sleeping and waking states.

5194 Octosyllabic.

5195 a foot: cf. OED, s.v. *foot* *v*, 4. On the rhymes *put/mul(a)foot*, see Daunt, 147.

- 5198–5201 The acquaintance of the lover with the new lady takes place, not in a garden, but in a clearing in the woods—a sign perhaps that this affair takes place under the aegis of Venus rather than Cupid. Clanvowe encounters the cuckoo and the nightingale on “a launde” (61) and Chaucer’s goddess Nature sits “in a launde, upon an hil of floures” within a garden (*PF* 302), but neither of these is a scene in which the narrator encounters a lady. See Haskell.
- 5200 Presumably to the Castle of No Care.
- 5202 For an explanation of the game, see Introduction, “Post and Pillar.” Games were an important part of courtly life. Stevens discusses a number of courtly games, including chess, tables, and other “games of love” (171–77), but no running games other than the one described here. Froissart’s beautiful young people play the game “roi qui ne ment,” (*Le Joli Buisson*, lines 4410ff.).
- 5205 On *as* as a relative, see Mustanoja, 202
- 5216 bihight: Daunt suggests that this “stands for *bihete*” (141).
- 5218 Though the line was revised, the cadence remains less than smooth.
- 5219 The lover spies an old acquaintance, whom he addresses as “cosyn,” and whose place he takes in the game, which must, therefore, have depended on an even number of men and women, plus someone who was “it” and someone who was chased. The lover starts out as “it.” Cf. *LBD* (Fr or E), in which the bereaved lover/narrator is forced by two friends he runs into by chance to join the party, where he overhears the love debate.
- 5221 in his corse: a *corse* is presumably a turn in the game.
fortore: though unlisted in MED, OED, s.v. for- gives “ffor-tatyrd and torne” from the Townley plays (Surtees 239) and “That blyssful bodey . . . was for-rent and for tourne” from *Dives and Pauper* (vi.xv.258/2).
- 5226 Again the friend is very gracious, assuring the narrator that he is welcome not only because he wanted to quit the game anyway (which his comment to the company in 5223 confirms), but on the narrator’s own account as well.
- 5227 The couples must be well spaced, because the one who is chased must be able to dart between them (and one of the attractions of the game was the opportunity for “communing” or *luf-talkyng*). They have apparently moved closer to the spot where the player with the unfortunately torn hose has gone to greet the lover and must now return to their places.
- 5231 The lover tries to demur (for form’s sake?) but the friend will not hear of it.
cosyne: MED apparently allows only blood relatives or god-relatives, but line 5219 makes clear that the two are acquainted but unrelated. OED gives, “term in intimacy, friendship, or familiarity” (s.v. cousin 5), and Poirion glosses the Fr “titre de politesse” (*Le Lexique*, s.v. cousin).
- 5232 The second half of the line may be declarative rather than interrogatory. It is probable that the exclamation “St. Ive!” is no reference to the saint, but a pseudo-oath, perhaps in common use, “calling upon” the ancient market at St. Ives (Hunts.), famous for its cloth dealers and thus appropri-

ately invoked when one has torn one's clothes. See Moore, 4-14, 278 and passim. Even though its importance as a center of cloth trading had declined as early as the first part of the fourteenth century, it was still known as a fair in the poet's day. The market is mentioned in the sixteenth century catalogue of fairs in Harrison's *Description of England* (396). The players are clearly gentles; it is accepted as a given that it is not possible to play games with torn stockings—even in the forest.

5237-40 to renne y gan to make a foot: S&D read *a-foot*, "on foot," which does not quite seem to work. Perhaps the closest (almost) modern expression is to "shake a leg" (see OED, s.v. foot v 2.b "to foot it"). He gives chase, "hotfooting" it after the other player.

about: around the outside of the circle; once he has tagged the other player ("on . . . of the rowt," 5239), he is then free to cross the circle, running "here and there" (5240). He takes refuge with the new lady, causing her partner to flee the pursuer (see 5318-19).

5244 pooreposse [MS *poore posse*]: "purpose"; Johan Gerritsen has suggested that both this word and "verry aunces" (5029) might be the result of a process of dictation at some stage in the transmission of these lines before the preparation of the present manuscript. The fact that Charles usually rhymes the word on the second syllable might be adduced in support of this hypothesis. The scribe resolved the sounds (or odd spelling—*?pourposs*) into two words meaning something like "poor venture, undertaking."

5246-53 Stevens says of this passage that it has "an authentic note"; it represents the kind of "luf-talkyng" much prized at the time (160; cf. *LBD* 789ff.). In 5243 the prospective lover considers various rhetorical ploys and settles on a standard form. The fact that he begins with a hypothetical question suggests an integration of a physical game involving couples and a verbal love game. For a discussion of games involving love *demandes* (including one that begins "yf ye hadde a trewe felow that louede you well, and that ye louede also . . ." [219]), see Green, "*Le Roi Qui Ne Ment*." In this case, as in fairy tales, the hero asks the wrong question. The lady's answer accords with the kind of decorum suggested by many of Green's examples.

5253 Owen and Owen gloss *way*, "oppress, i.e., destroy." Cf. 5262.

5259 sit: MS *set* is probably an error (rhymes *witt*), i.e., "suits"; but elsewhere Charles rhymes short [e] with short [i] (4389-91, 5056-57).

5265 Cf. the argument of the third *tercel* in *PF* 470-73.

5276-78 Cf. R 57.

5279 The MS shows a dotted *i* followed by *e* (the word has been altered from *y*). The scribe has erased the second stroke of *y* incompletely (because of lack of space), leaving the first one to do duty for *i* and adding *e*. Because the *i* is a makeshift for reasons of space, I have printed *ye*.

5281 Cf. *PF* 656.

5282 The lover is complaining of his lack of skill at *luf-talkyng*.

5284-89 The lover's appeal has caused the lady to turn pale. He is apparently

more worried than she is about appearances, and from her reply it would seem that he is taking over her role at this point (cf. *Remede* 3429–32, where it is the lady who returns the lover's greeting quickly so that the company will not notice his obvious love for her). For her use of *nysse* in describing the lover, compare that of Venus in 4779. (The mention of a *kercher* is probably no accident.)

5289–5302 The addition of *of* in 5290 improves meter and sense.

Like Chartier's lady, she finds the lover's praises excessive and doubts that the pain he suffers is life-endangering (see *LBD* 293–96, 615–16; Chartier, 265–68), showing very clearly that she is not deceived by his florid language and refined manner. She seems experienced, and her reply, rather in the manner of *La Belle Dame*, hints at her possible unresponsiveness in the future. She makes no promises she may not want to keep later. In 5296 she claims to have no power to regulate his behavior. Despite this, the lover maintains his baroque eloquence, perhaps one reason for his lack of success in this affair.

5301–2 Cf. *FkIT* 981–82.

5308 Cf. 5427.

5311 He asks if she can read (using an interrogative form which assumes a positive answer); the author must have thought this an appropriate question. Perhaps she admits to being able to read only “so-so,” but in line 6391 the same three words are used to mean simply “yes, yes, yes.” Cf. 4839, where the lover remembers seeing his former love writing.

5317 raket: the MED glosses this as a game-term (“?the player being chased to and fro in the game of pillar & post”) on the basis of this passage. S&D gloss “noisy crowd.” The context suggests that the reference is to the “pair,” i.e., the chaser and chased. See OED, s.v. racket sb.1 (1374–1440), “some game played with dice”; sb.2 (1529–), “a game of ball played by two persons”; sb3 (1565–), “disturbance, loud noise, . . . produced by noisy . . . conduct . . .”; how these meanings might relate to Charles's is unclear.

5324 *Crepusculus*: should be trisyllabic to fit the meter (cf. Chaucer's “crepuscule,” *Astr* 2.9.1).

5326 Perhaps: “because I was not dining (with that company) that night,” or perhaps he is giving evidence of the depth of his love. Owen and Owen suggest that he fasts as “part of his ceremonial grief for his dead lady,” but this would not be a good point at which to remind the reader of his previous allegiance (which is about to be compromised).

5330 Cf. Gower *CA* 4.2875ff.

5332 The lover retired to the Castle of No Care to get rid of Sorrow; according to his account to Venus of his experience of his retirement, he dwelt there with Sorrow nonetheless; now he “welcomes” Sorrow back again. See 364, 2046–47, 4816–19, and 5856–58.

5333 *y shrympe yowre berd*: S&D offer two guesses in their glossary: “?shrivel (see OED *scrimp* [and Burchfield, 126]); ?error for *shympe*, mock, *cp.* Ger. *schimpfen*.” Both glosses would seem to suggest that the lady is somehow

blaming the lover for something, but the invitation that follows in the next line (and in 5337) seems to contradict this. A more likely explanation might be cobbled together as follows: the expression "beshrew" ("a plague on") used with weakened force ("humorous or playful") is attested in the sixteenth century (OED, s.v. beshrew 3b). The aphetic form "shrew" is also attested (a unique instance of the word "beshromp" is recorded from 1547 and glossed "beshrew"). In addition, Halliwell-Phillipps gives "shrape" [J. Wright: "shreap"] (to scold) and "shrip" (to rate or chide). My guess is that the lady finds the lover's expression of his distress, "Now welcome, Sorrow," overly dramatic (which is in keeping with the skepticism she has already expressed). She responds with a direct statement ("You frighten me!") and a playful reproach indicating mock severity ("I shrew your beard!" meaning "a plague on you!"; a British colleague suggests "I'm ruffling your beard!").

5335 *seynt Iohne to borow*: "St. John protect you"; cf. *PF* 451 and *SqT* 596.

5336 *bet*: used in this case as a kind of intensifier rather than a comparative form. The lady is encouraging him.

5339 The naturalness and concreteness of the discussion of such arrangements contrasts sharply with the indeterminate idealism of the ballades to follow.

5342 As in his relationship with the first lady, his heart cleaves to the lady (5330; cf., e.g., 794–95) and yet (illogically) suffers with the lover (cf., e.g., 895–902).

5346–49 The procedure is described once again as a choice between speaking and writing; both love affairs (with the marked exception of the narrator's account to Venus) seem to be affairs of the written word. In 5313, the lover asks permission to write to the lady, but here the lover decides in the first place to speak because he does not want to allow much time to elapse during which his new lady might forget him. In line 5404–5 he even says that he can express his pain *better* in writing than in person.

5352 *sorse & welle*: a common phrase, frequent in Lydgate.

In the second ballade sequence, the lover is even more abject, more florid, more tortured, and apparently nearer death than in the first. He begs to be punished—even killed, if necessary—for imagined wrongs (B 85). For her part, the lady is mistrustful (B 88) and has a heart of stone (B 90 and 103). She is a murderess (B 91) who thinks the lover a goblin or bear or serpent (B 92), and so on.

S&D felt that neither the ballades nor the epistle Charles moved into this sequence (all with Fr counterparts, assuming that the Fr versions are prior) fit very well into the context of the second love affair. B 101 may contain "happy talk" about stealing kisses, but there is no evidence that the lover succeeds in his theft. The envoy of B 107 is very much in accord with the tone of this sequence. Though speaking of an impending absence, there is nothing in the epistle (5688ff.) to render it inappropriate to this love affair; on the contrary, his complaints about his heart and his concern for appearances (5728) echo his concerns from his first meeting with the lady. For a succinct description of the kind of lady the lover has chosen,

- see Chaucer's *Anel* 183–92. (B 111 and B 113 were written very late in Charles's captivity and apparently intended in the first place for this sequence; see Introduction, "Order of Composition.")
- 5354 helle: "conceal"; rhymes *welle*; cf. 4075: *hele/dele/fele*.
- 5359 Cf. *PF* 217.
- 5365 *bettir*: a metrical improvement on scribal *bett*.
- 5376 In his very first ballade to the new lady he pressures her to make a definite move, claiming already that he "kan no more." The preliminaries are very nearly eliminated.
- 5380 More: S&D suggest *No more*; Charles's opening lines are usually so carefully crafted that I have chosen rather to consider it a headless line and add the negative necessary for sense to the following line.
- 5385–96 Cf. 184. He proceeds to give the lady his heart (5385), service (5388), body, and goods (5396).
- 5406 "If *not the lesse* were removed, it would be an octosyllable, as in 5405; so there is a chance that there has been an attempt at revision" (S&D).
- 5415 The lover discovers the lady's unresponsiveness almost immediately, and his situation rapidly deteriorates from there.
- 5436–39 The idea was proverbial both in E (Whiting & Whiting S797) and in Fr ("Après grant guere grant pees," Le Roux de Lincy, 2.472, also 239–40; see also Morawski, no. 109ff.). Cf. Gower, *CB* 20, st. 2: "Après la guerre om voit venir la pes, / Apres l'ivern est l'estée beal flori," and *CA* 8.2259–65.
- gray*: though our reaction to the comparison is different, *gray* must have had positive connotations for the poet. Cf. R 62.
- 5445 Plural for singular to accommodate the rhyme.
Eccles. 37:21: "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds." Cf. *PP* B X.457–62.
- Le ciel amont de la justice dieu
Trespencerai, si jeo les seintz requiere;
Mais a ce point c'est ma dame abstenu,
Qe toutdis clot s'oraille a ma matiere. (*CB* 18, st. 3)
- this is no nay: cf. *LBD* 433.
- 5455 As y it had bigonne yestirday: there is a certain hollowness in this statement, as this is only the fourth ballade he has addressed to the lady.
- 5462 Cf. the disclaimer of Tyme Apast in 2956 as well as 3099–3100.
- 5471 The syntax of the sentence is not entirely clear. The refrain might be read "so that your disdain slays me [though I am] guiltless" or perhaps "by which your disdain [the cause of the pain (5469)] slays me. . . ."
- 5470 Octosyllabic.
- 5486 *marbil hert enkerue*: anticipates the following ballade (see 5500n).
- 5487 S&D suggest that *ye* is omitted.
- 5488 This is the only Valentine reference in the second ballade sequence.
- 5497 Apparently a conflation of two constructions: the poet has inserted into a clause that means "... you who appear soft, but are hard" another clause that means something like "according to the evidence of my eyes it

- seems that I love someone who is soft. . . ." *Which* refers back to *yow* in 5485.
- 5500 Cf. 5516 and *LBD* 717: "O marble herte, and yet more hard, parde."
The image of a marble heart is common in medieval French literature.
- 5501-2 *quantite*: the word has two aspects: that of time is picked up in "lengthe of tyme" (5504); that of quantity, in *writel/saynel/complayne*. According to Lydgate, women who are left alone, "Thogh they [be] harde as dyamaunt, / Mercy maketh hem plyaunt," for "Water that droppeth euer in oon / Myneth ful depe in-to A stoon" (*R&S*, 6913-14, 6917-18; also Gower, *CB*, Ballade 18). The expression (in various forms) was proverbial (Whiting & Whiting H277; Tilley H311).
- 5508 Charles chooses the story of Pygmalion to illustrate the hardness of his lady's heart, an unusual emphasis. Pygmalion "the kerver" echoes 5486. These images link up with the image of hardness in B 91. The story of Pygmalion has a particularly rich history in late medieval love poetry, beginning with the *RR* (see Huot, *From Song to Book*, 296-97, 312-13, and *passim*).
- 5520-43 "In my entent" (5523) parallels "in yowre party" (5524). "Kynde" (5520) is picked up in "vnkynde" (5522) and "kyndenes" (5539), used in both of its senses, "unnatural" and "unkind." To compound the poem's intricacy, God sins (5523), the lady is a potential murderess (5525, 5530) and no woman (5528), and the interplay of death and life is prominent.
- 5530 Although there is talk of "slaying" in the first sequence, the rhetoric used here would have been unthinkable there. Grandson had also referred to his unresponsive lady as "tel dame murtriere" ("Livre," line 1741; Piaget, 450).
- 5549 *S&D* suggest that *it* repeats *hert*; it seems more typical of Charles's syntax to take *it* as referring to *lemys* in the wrong number (or conversely, though less likely, that the scribe wrote *lemys* for *leme*, though this would injure the meter). *Hath* is the same sort of "plural" as found in 358. The line may owe something to the opening of *CT*. Charles uses the word *perse* four times: once in the first ballade sequence (1289) and then three times in the space of four ballades (5447, 5502, 5549).
- 5550 O furlong way: modifies *restrayne*; cf. *HF* 2063-64.
- 5557 The scribe wrote *is*, probably an error for *as* used with the temporal expression *when y come* (Mustanoja, 333), since otherwise it repeats the verb of the previous line.
- 5560-62 Gobelyne . . . crewelle worme . . . bere: on such images of barely-contained anger and violence, see Wack, 158; the state of mind she describes is that of the lover through most of the second ballade sequence.
- 5564 *lo* as this: *lo* may here be acting as a "spacer" and *as this* emphasizing and pointing to the second cause.
- 5566 Cf. 430: "[I] lese the good chere that straungers have alway"; and *LBD* 420: "[I am] lesse set by, than other that be straunge."
- 5569 *bihouyth*: neither OED nor MED gives "benefits" for the verb form.
- 5581 *fele*: parallel with *shewith*; strictly speaking, the form should be *felith* (and the poet may have been thinking of *y* as the subject).

- 5583 Charles uses the word *wo(o)* eighty-nine times, always in the singular.
- 5586–87 what begins tentatively (“me thynkith”) ends as a positive assertion (“y yow ensewre”).
- 5594 many may report: a word such as *thewis* (virtues) must be understood (“I may report many [such virtues]”).
- 5604 S&D take *doon* as “cause”: I have caused to be abandoned, and I shall (continue to). I suspect that *bandonyd* simply repeats *doon* in the same tense, just as a noun often repeats a (preceding) pronoun: “I have given up and shall continue to”; see OED, s.v. *do* 25d (and 31).
- 5612–14 The Golden Rule (Luke 6:31, Matt. 7:12) is an old ploy in the game of fulfilling one’s desires and a common proverb in the late Middle Ages.
- 5614 scripture: echoes 5600 (the only other use of the word), where it is applied to the ballade itself. It may in fact have been the use of the word as a rhyme which suggested to Charles the use of the Bible here (and its echo in the following ballade, 5640–41).
- 5623–24 It is possible that *als* after *vnkynde* was picked up by the scribe from the previous line; if so, these two lines are octosyllabic.
- 5629 If I have interpreted it correctly, this line combines an introduction or pointing to the proverb with an expression of the lover’s innocence. For this use of *singe*, cf. *CA* 2.1299–1300. If it is not proverbial, Charles borrowed the expression in 5630 from *T&C* 2.392. Cf. *LBD* 436: “love for love were lawful deserving” (Chartier, 408: “Qu’amour soit par amour merie”). The “proverb” echoes the Golden Rule, above, and anticipates 5640–41. Whiting & Whiting cite Chaucer, Roos (L506).
- 5637 The use of *wherto* with *trusten* is odd.
- 5653–54 fest: probably chosen for rhyme. Charles seems to use the word with broader meaning than either OED or MED allows, e.g., of the gathering of the God of Love’s parliament. In this case I have glossed “delight.”
- 5661 S&D take *nouncertayne* as a noun (“in uncertainty”) and suggest that the verb has been omitted. Since the meter indicates no omissions, I have taken *nouncertayne* as an adjective and *in* as in error for *is*.
- 5664 is: MED reads *?as* (s.v. infortune). This is one possibility. The other is to read “since it is so that Ill Fortune desires to . . .” — a construction that would parallel the opening line.
- 5688–5783 Following Champion, S&D title this poem “Complaint,” but the one beginning on 6129 (without Fr counterpart) a “Letter”; both are love epistles. They find this poem inappropriate to the second ballade sequence (its Fr counterpart is part of the first sequence). The poem dwells on the lady’s absence rather than her cruelty, but there is no reason why that should render it unfit for inclusion in this series. It introduces some variety into the series, counterbalances the other epistle in the series, and recalls the lover’s loss of composure at his first leave-taking from this lady. Camargo discusses both epistles (chap. 4; see also chap. 1) and points out that the two epistles divide the second ballade sequence into groups of twelve, twelve, and thirteen ballades. He also notes that the epistles are marked as less formal than the other pseudo-documents in the work by

being written in the same form as either the ballades or the narrative verse, whereas the other documents each have their own verse forms (106).

5688–91 These four lines constitute the salutation of the letter, followed by the usual reference to the well-being of the sender. In fact, of course, (nearly) all the ballades are also to be read as letters; the two epistles in this sequence are simply longer and more thoroughgoing examples of the genre.

5694 The scribe (who usually matches rhyme-word spellings) may have taken *fele* (“many”) as *fel(le)* “grievous,” “painful.”

5704–11 Daunt explains that these rhymes should be taken, not as diphthongs [ei] but as [i:] (143). It is not possible to say with certainty whether these are masculine or feminine rhymes; given Charles’s apparent aversion to feminine rhyme, he may have pronounced *-eyen/-ien* as monosyllables.

5711 suffir: the Fr version suggests that this is an error for *so fer*.

tofore: apparently repeats *tofore* in the previous line, but the MS form *toforme* spoils the rhyme. Charles might well have written *toforme*, however, in which case the emendation is merely a bit of overzealous tidying-up.

Fr: Q’oncques ne le vy, en nulz lieux,
Si eslongnié de Reconfort.

5713 Charles is here playing on will/well.

Fr: . . . mes yeulx estoient
En un tel vouloir de pleurer.

5717 insuspeciuon: MED glosses “inward or secret suspicion.” The suspicion belongs not to the eyes but to those who keep a close watch on them. The *in-* prefix thus probably acts as an intensifier (as in *ingoodly*) rather than an indication that the suspicion is inward.

5724–25 Was: perhaps an error for *Nas* (I was never so upset in all my life . . .), though on other occasions Charles introduces a negative at a point in the sentence later than we expect.

forcast aside: in this context *aside* probably has the connotation of “into seclusion” (woe separated the lover from human society), or perhaps it was simply used in place of *adoun* because of the exigencies of rhyme.

sore: “sworn”; cf. spelling in 3511.

5737 partid yow away: MED does not record *part away* used with an object but without *from*.

5738 diskewre: cf. 5251: *ensewre/creature/diskeuer*.

5739 The lover thus spends more than half his letter impressing on the lady how difficult his last parting from her was.

5746–48 After the lover dies, he will continue to serve the lady by praying for her with his (disembodied) soul. He seems to expect that she will outlive him, though this is probably nothing more than the excessive rhetoric he employs. The rhyme of line 5748 plays on the Fr (“S’il en estoit en son devis”), “if it were in her (i.e., the soul’s) power.”

5752 MS *nenyscher* is apparently an error for *nenysther* (*ne nys ther*; cf. 5942: *nysther*).

5766 wante: *þ* has been omitted on *wanteþ*, probably because of confusion caused by the following *þ*.

5767 Cf. 4840 and R 69.

5769 *-eris* is monosyllabic (5772 is a Lydgate line).

5776–83 This stanza constitutes the closing of the epistle.

5784–86 Charles has omitted a stressed syllable after *Ankir*, as well as after *gladder* in 5786.

5788 pikid: MED glosses “obtained.” The lover has taken on a life of endless woe even though he is free to live as he chooses among men. The hermit, who has few choices, is both holy and happy. Therefore I have glossed the word “chosen.”

5793 Cf. 4852.

5804 staynyd: MED glosses “taint,” “sully” (s.v. *steinen*). The lady makes other ladies looked “stained” only by contrast with her own beauty; she wishes them no ill. The possibility of distinguishing in literary Fr between subject and object forms may have contributed to the poet’s disregard of more usual word order.

5806 nare: cf. 3745: “alas that y nare to yow nere”; apparently Charles felt he could use the form as first person singular.

5810 worthis: switches from the subjunctive of the previous two lines to indicative.

5812–35 The idea of the repetition of patterns of initial words in the first three stanzas seems to have arisen at the end of the previous poem (*Wo worth*) and echoes the technique in B 59.

5830 The final *how* is probably an error for *now* (S&D).

5834 entewne: not attested by MED with the meaning “bring into tune,” but the OED records it, citing *FL* 180.

5837 doth: “‘to’ should be added, rectifying the metre; cf. 5679” (S&D).

5848–55 Cf. *BD* 599–615 and *T&C* 5.1373–79. In this stanza only the first and third (rhyming) lines are decasyllabic; the rest are octosyllabic.

5858 Cf. *BD* 597. Both lines (Chaucer’s and Charles’s) are octosyllabic.

5863 *is* has probably been omitted before *tornyd*.

5868 of: “or”; cf. 2661, 4360, and 393n.

5870–71 Echoes the second stanza of the previous ballade.

5873 doer: i.e., “wikkid folke” (5875).

5874 Cf. *T&C* 5.1596: “Syn ye with me, nor I with yow, may dele.”

5876–91 This word-patterning is similar to that in 73–78, one reason why it is logical to suppose that that verse was written fairly late in the composition of the whole work.

5885 Not maugre but in spite: “the English word appears to the poet to be stronger than the French” (S&D).

5896 In the final arrangement, this ballade was displaced from the first ballade sequence, as was B 107 and the first epistle. S&D find it, “with its happy talk of stealing kisses” (5352n), awkwardly placed among these ballades. On the other hand, it follows very easily on the envoy of the previous ballade. S&D do not mention that there is no indication that the lover receives anything at all from the lady (“ye myght well amende all þis matere,” he says in 5910). The lover simply takes another tack in his

- effort to win some favor from his distant lady. The following ballade implies that the gambit failed.
- 5901-2 Fr: Mais que n'y prenez desplaisir
Et que le vueilliez consentir.
- 5924 Saue me my lijf: for this construction see *LGW* 1648.
- 5936 warith: plural.
- 5940-41 These lines echo lines 5576-77. Cf. *PF* 1-2 and *Anel* 238.
- 5945 MS *disseyvith* is probably an error for *disservith* (cf. 83).
- 5946 hele: S&D gloss "state of health," but in their corrigenda gloss "hell." In light of the refrain, I have glossed "cure."
confound: the reflexive pronoun has been omitted.
- 5952 Once more the poet returns to the imagery of B 89-91 to express the lady's obduracy.
- 5954 The scribe has written *putt* in error for *piti*.
- 5958-59 The ballade has a two-line refrain. *Me* seems to repeat *that* (whom). The syntax is obviously as the poet meant it to be, as he repeats it four times in exactly the same form. Perhaps each line should be read as a separate exclamation: Alas, to think that I should be the one (who suffers such misery)! (To think) that loyalty will not reward me as I deserve!
- 5965 deserued: the scribe has omitted the final *d*, perhaps because he looked at the word that follows *y*.
- 5981 Cf. *Anel* 211 and 350.
- 5983 S&D suggest that Roos (*LBD* 275) imitates this line.
- 5988-90 *bi . . . nere* seems to be a dependent clause explaining what the moth *doth* but apparently lacking a word like *that*.
- 6006 secunde daunce: S&D gloss "in the second stage of my love" but do not explain what that might be. It is unlikely that he would be reminding his lady that she is his second love, but it surely suggests to the reader that the narrator has danced this (old) dance before, and that he seems unlikely to become wiser, however his lady responds. Cf. "the dance of lufe" (*KQ* 1290, st. 185).
- 6014 for: S&D gloss "in return for," but this sits ill with *borow* in the previous line; it is rather a conj.
in ther company: S&D remark aptly that this *ought* to mean "in their place"; I have found no better solution. The premise of the ballade is that the lady has taken his joy from him (by force) and left him in place of it, as a pledge, woe. Needless to say, he would like her to redeem her pledge, but since she does not seem to be in a hurry to do so, he suggests, in the third stanza, that the pledge be sent to her foes (Suspicion, Evil Sayers, and their ilk)—better for them to suffer woe than him.
- 6016 Weal and joy are treated as a single entity (i.e., singular) throughout, except in 6014-15. For the spelling with *will(e)* (weal), see also 6015 and 6032 (where, according to the rhyme spellings, it ought to be *wele*).
- 6025 MED lists no use with *vnto* in this negative sense. S&D suggest that *yowre* is an error for *owre* or *my*.
- 6027 hem: scribal *home* is probably an error.

bi a dede of yeft: an official document transferring the pledge from him to them.

6028 Kent is a county apparently much used in proverbs to mean "the end of the world" (e.g., "from Kent to Northumberland," "from here to Kent"). Cf. OED, s.v. go 30b. S&D suggest that *the deville* and *Kent* may mean the same thing (Kentish men were said to have long tails). Halliwell-Phillipps says that Kent "was so famous a place for robberies in Elizabeth's time that the name was given to any nest of thieves" (s.v. Kent).

6029 care: parallel to *wolde* in 6021.

horrow: cf. *Mars* 206.

6033-34 arowe: a strained rhyme (and one of Charles's rare feminine rhymes). This is another instance of the lover's more desperate ploys against this second, less responsive lady.

6043 The word *me* after *do* is apparently an error (omitted in the following refrain lines).

6045-46 The collocation *eschewe to* plus verb is perfectly common; a complication arises because *flee* requires *from* plus noun. The whole stanza apparently escaped revision.

6048 *flee* would repeat the rhyme from 6045 (with the same meaning). The context suggests that it is perhaps an error for *see*. One possible solution would be to read: "But when þe hert causith the eyen see / And her biholde. . . ." S&D suggest that *there* is an error for *they*.

In the first stanza the heart (which collaborates with Love) is the primary offender. In this stanza, though the speaker says it is impossible for any heart that looks on the lady to flee from love, the heart nevertheless causes the eyes to look on her, which (because the heart is already prepared to love) causes the lover instant pain, and the spiral of love is underway. This cluster of ideas comes from the tradition of the debate of the eye and the heart (see Introduction, "Themes and Conventions: The Heart"; and Leyerle, 126n). Spence speaks of the "breakdown not only of the courtly voice but of the courtly persona as well" that the separation of eye and heart from the lover betokens, but the late medieval debates between eye and heart, as well as this text, suggest otherwise ("French *Chansons*," 285).

6055 ye: he speaks here, not to the lady, but to the heart, to the eyes, and perhaps also to Love.

6057-58 S&D suggest (glossary) that *were* is an error for *nere* and gloss, "It is not because of you that I am not dead; it is not your fault that I am still alive." I have not found a better solution.

6064-96 Fr: "Mon cuer dormant en Nonchaloir." Having displaced this ballade to the second sequence, the poet has eradicated the reference to No Care, which would make little sense in this context. The padding out of (Fr) octosyllables into decasyllables seems especially evident in this stanza; the result, both heavy and wordy.

S&D state categorically that this ballade "is no better placed in E than it was in F," but the optimism of the lover may well be intended here

to provide some dynamics in this sequence, based, perhaps, on an unfortunate misreading of his lady's intentions or as a result of a cruel joke on her part. In any case, B 107 and B 108 contrast wonderfully in tone; the promise made in 6110 may well be that rejoiced over in this ballade. Well may he "drede hir manase," in the envoy, which Charles wrote only for the E version of the poem (6098). The lover's repentance in the epistle that follows then provides another twist in this tortured affair. Charles's conscious linking of many "strings" of ballades leads me to believe that his organization of the poems was intermittent, but careful.

Richard Green suggests that the heart in this poem may be a love token in the shape of a heart ("Hearts, Minds," 147-48). The reference in 6086-87 ("logge in þe fresshe manar / Of the body of hir") suggests to me a rather more physiological exchange (she "buys" the heart only in the sense that she "pays" with her own).

6075 A demonstration of the two ways of stressing *refuse*.

6077 The only clear instance of *are* with a second person singular pronoun, probably used for the rhyme.

6080 The meter requires the shorter form, *Out*.

6085 The scribe (or the poet?) simply copied the same refrain line four times without noticing that the context required a change of pronoun.

6086 logge: ought properly to be reflexive. Daunt explains the *-ar* spellings in the rhymes as Northernisms (138).

6101 The contrast in tone between this ballade and the previous one is stunning, as it was surely meant to be. The lover has been seriously misled—or he has deluded himself into some fantasy entirely without the help of the lady.

R. H. Robbins (who surely read more love lyrics than any of us) said that "a complaint must never become an attack on a lady for withholding her 'solace'; to do so would not only be bad form socially, but would direct attention away from the poet himself" ("Structure," 250). This is assuredly "bad form socially."

6105 say: either Charles has used a plural for singular for the rhyme or, less likely, *-s* has been dropped out of *tonges* before a following *s*.

6109-6112 The tone of bitterness in this passage, expressed in somewhat nasty terms, is new at this point. The lover accuses the lady of making a promise (to give him her heart?) in order to put him off and then be unfaithful to him—*praitly*. His coarseness accords with his painful disillusionment. His recounting of this in the third person reflects his unwillingness to speak too frankly even in the depths of his pain. It is a very effective ballade.

to holden on honde: Robinson, glossing the phrase in *HF* 692, says it means "cajoling, putting off with false hopes." Cf. *T&C* 5.1614-15.

gyve an horne: see 1829n. MED records only *haue an horn* (s.v. horn). Ross (*Miller's Tale*) finds "no evidence . . . that horns were associated with cuckolds in Chaucer's time" (3161n, 125). Cf. *RR* 4809-10: "Plus est cornars que cers ramés / Riches hons qui cuide estre amés."

6121 The proverb is a common one in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Whiting & Whiting cite Heywood (1564): "I see daie at this little hole"

- (D38.92) among others (D61); in other words, it only takes a small betrayal to show you the true nature of the person you are dealing with. Charles incorporates proverbs into many of his Fr poems (e.g., in *Rondeaux XXXV* and *LXIII*), a practice common among his French contemporaries. Shakespeare represents the duke as fond of proverbs (and *repartee*) in *Henry V* (3.7).
- 6122–23 Another common proverb. Cotgrave, s.v. *hair*: “He neuer soundly loued that hateth for a toy”; also Tilley, O16 (with variations). The lover’s recourse to proverbial wisdom is a measure of his disgust and despair; he has run out of means to express himself in his own words.
- 6124 Because of the altered syntax, the refrain lacks a (stressed) syllable.
- 6129–35 His “offence” is the previous ballade. The opening of this epistle is less strongly marked than that of the previous one. *recomaunde*: S&D note the stress on the second syllable, “common especially in Northern poems” (6130n).
- 6136–40 We are not told the precise circumstances of this upheaval in the relation between the lover and his lady, but we are to understand that the previous (bitter) ballade was written in response to an unkind letter from the lady. Her “haste” (perhaps not fully-considered action) is contrasted with his “wikkid hast” (rash reaction). That his rash answer was born of impulsive action makes him think (6139) that her letter was likewise composed on impulse, or at least that is how he plans to excuse her. The motivation for this longer epistle would seem to be that the lover has a lot of explaining to do.
- 6142 Without: something like *With such* would seem to make better sense.
- 6146 S&D give, “the contrary of which took place, to my mind” and cite *T&C* 4.1562 for the *take* construction. It is the poet’s use of the article before *which* that leads me to a different reading.
- 6149 ruggid: perhaps “crude.” Cf. 4203: *ragged* (of thoughts). MED glosses *squaryng*: “wrangling, grumbling” [s.v. *squaring(e)*].
- 6162 The addition of *a* before *store* improves both sense and meter.
- 6164–70 This fine stanza sounds like a genuine epistolary good-bye written by a lover who, despite his arguments, knows he has gone too far this time to hope to be forgiven, but the effect is not lasting. The lady apparently sends some encouraging words, as the following stanza attests.
- In 6169 he may be playing on “well/weal” as well as on “will” (wish).
- 6178–79 The ballade has a two-line refrain, the second of which seems to be an imperative: “besse hit to me”; but I have not solved the riddle of its meaning. S&D suggest we take *hit* as *hite* or *hiȝt* and *besse* as *bese* (to be): “you are promised, pledged.” Perhaps *bisen* (OED *bese*), “give heed (to), think (on),” is worth consideration.
- 6181 nor set o poynt ashore: S&D paraphrase the line, “do not play for safety, but launch out boldly.” MED, s.v. *setten*: “to fix on a point for guidance, take direction” (6268); and “even one small portion” (6181). Daunt glosses, “‘don’t set the course one point towards the land,’ e.g., ‘don’t

retreat or hesitate'” (145). In both instances the context seems to point rather to a meaning like “leave nothing out.” *Ashore* is related to that in the modern phrase “to shore up” rather than to “(sea)shore” (see OED, s.v. shore sb3, v1, and MED, s.v. ashore, “aslant”; also, s.v. point sb III6b).

6192 We never learn what it is the lady would/ought to know but does not, just as we have not been told what she swore to the lover earlier in the ballade (6173–74); but judging from the first two lines of the stanza, it is something that makes the lover very happy. “The missing syllable at the cesura makes the effect more striking” (S&D).

6200 meynt: the preposition *twene* makes clear that this is not *mengen* (mix), as S&D have it, but *menen*. The nearest the dictionaries come to the meaning “goes back and forth, alternates” is “mediate” (OED, s.v. mean [OF moien]) or “act as go between” (MED). *Apalle* (6201) and *enwarne* (“to make warm, i.e., red, with anger,” 6206) illustrate this alternation. The spelling is probably an error for *ment*, perhaps because the scribe was aware that in the complexions of beauties: “Rose and lileis togedir were . . . meint” (*TG* 276); but see *BlkKn* 229–31, 235–36:

With hote and colde myn acces is so meynt,
That now I chiver for defaute of hete,
And, hoot as gleeed, now sodainly I swete.

.....
For hete I brenne; and thus, betwixe twayne,
I possed am, and al forcast in payne.

This lady seems especially susceptible to changes of complexion: see 5284.

6203 Taken: MED glosses “to derive (sth., a quality), draw” (s.v. taken 20a).

6217 Whiting & Whiting cite both this instance of the proverb and *T&C* 4.586–88 (W555).

6218–19 I.e., as quickly as the proverb is recited, the suspicion subsides. He is reassuring her in order to pave the way for his request, which follows immediately.

6221 Cf. 5630.

6223 al: perhaps an error for *and* (S&D).

6227 Charles addressed the Fr counterpart of this ballade to Phillip, duke of Burgundy, and refers to his duchess (“ma cousine”) in the third stanza. For the E ballade, Charles chose merely to echo the refrain, which in the Fr runs “de cuer, de corps et de puissance.” The rest of the two ballades has nothing in common (the Fr is in eleven-line stanzas, with a six-line envoy). The fact that the poems are nonetheless related is confirmed by the fact that B 113 is an adaptation of a ballade sent by Phillip to Charles, which opens with the same line Charles used as his refrain in this poem (see 6283n). Both Fr poems were written in 1439. On these poems, see Harrison, “Orleans.”

6244 S&D suggest *sekis* is imp pl (glossary); if so, it is the only instance of *-is* (the poet uses only *-ith*, occasionally *-eth*, or no ending for the imperative).

6261 Perhaps because the second ballade sequence is drawing to a close, the

- lover seems to have less and less need for words.
- 6264 Me: the scribe has written *Mi*, perhaps picked up from the following line; cf. 6130.
- 6268 set no poynt ashore: see 6181n.
- 6269 aspectis: if this is what Charles wrote, the lady is seen as a heavenly body whose current motion (i.e., away from the lover by 180 degrees) brings evil influence.
- 6275 livith withouten pere: a variation on his phrase "livith withouten ayre" (2148).
- 6283 This ballade is an adaptation of a poem written by the duke of Burgundy in response to a poem by Charles. Burgundy borrowed Orleans' refrain for his first line ("de cueur, de corps et de puissance"), and that line is translated more literally in the opening line of this ballade than it was in B 111 (cf. also the opening of B 86). Though transforming Burgundy's ballade into a love poem, he produces an E counterpart which refers to the Fr poem repeatedly (not only in verbal echoes, but in tone), diverging completely from Burgundy only in the envoy. Where Burgundy wrote of "la noble maison de France," Charles writes (in E) of his lady's physical charms, an interesting and probably significant transformation. Burgundy writes of peace obtainable only through Charles's *delivrance* from England; Charles writes of his *delyueraunce* from pain only through the lady's grace. The two poems invite further study. Although the first two lines (and 6288) are decasyllabic, the rest of the poem is in octosyllables.
- 6293-94 We are left to guess (without much difficulty) what it is the lover would like to see. S&D (306) mention the "suggestive remarks" in 6293 (as well as those in 941, 3582-83, and 5906) as having no counterpart in the Fr.
- 6295 that: repeats *hit*, unless perhaps *hit* is an error for *bis*.
- 6312 *am* has apparently been omitted after *y*. This idea is picked up in the opening line of the next ballade.
- 6315 without part of elliswhere servise: the line may be borrowed from the "Littera Troili" (*T&C* 5.1318), or perhaps it is a common formula.
- 6320 sende: used without object both here and in 6324, though in the second case the line is short. A letter or message is implied.
- 6324 Octosyllabic.
- 6330-41 Lines 6331, 6333, 6337, 6341 are decasyllabic; the rest, octosyllabic.
- 6338 brest: singular for the rhyme.
- 6342-66 One of the very few octosyllabic ballades.
- 6347-48 deth/seith: see Daunt, 141.
- 6348 Cf. *BD* 875-76; Lydgate, "Epithalamium for Gloucester," lines 104-5 (Hammond, *English Verse*, 147). This is perhaps the most explicit debate (or *strif*) between the eye and heart.
- 6349 The scribe has written *then* in error.
- 6363 It is possible that Charles wrote *goodlihod*, but the spelling with *e* improves the rhyme.
- 6367 This poem is an exercise in Daunger; the lady manages to hold the lover at

bay without ever being less than courteous. She presents him with a conundrum and literally “out-wits” him. Apart from the lover’s account of their first encounter, this is the only time the lady speaks. The first ballade sequence, too, contains a ballade in dialogue form, but there the lover converses with his heart. The “voice” of the first lady is never recorded.

This kind of ballade in dialogue form was popular in France; see, for instance, Christine de Pisan’s “Balade a Responses” (*Oeuvres*, 121–22).

6369 occupy: the poet uses this word on only one other occasion (1584), where it seems to mean simply “occupy.” Utley refers to the “obscure pun on the word ‘occupy’” in this ballade and says that the lover “threatens to beat her [the lady] and she succumbs” (Hartung, *Manual*, 3.729). S&D do not clarify things much (“**occupy**: in the 15th and 16th centuries this could represent the Latin *occupare amplexu*”—and they quote Shakespeare [6375n]). In 5352n they refer to this ballade as “frivolous” and claim that it “cannot celebrate the same lady,” but they give no idea of what they think it really means. In the sixteenth century, the word had taken on the meaning “to copulate with a woman,” but it has clearly not developed that far by the time Charles uses it, for the word is used by the lady as well as the lover (see Partridge, Henke, McClure, 54, and 2HenIV 2.4.161). MED offers the meaning “to fill (one’s heart or mind) with love, lechery, desire.” The oversized hand drawn in the margin that points to the first line of this poem may be a reaction of a reader to the content of the poem. Though I once thought so, I am no longer convinced that the poem has risqué overtones.

6370 mot me wite: once again Charles uses an objective form where we would expect a subject (cf. 1646, 6244).

6377–78 woo is me for yowre seek hele: an exact restatement of Venus’s mock sympathy in 5071; “heeel” in the next line echoes it (cf. 5295).

6383–86 that cosse: attempting to return irony for mockery, he thanks her for the kiss she denies him with her logic (in effect, “Write that one off!”). Judging from her response (6385–86), his effort at irony is lost on her.

6384 Forwhi: St suggests “?however.” Perhaps it is an error for *for which*, perhaps referring to the kiss? A simple “but” would seem to do the job.

6387–90 Her flippant rejoinder makes the lover angry, and he retorts with, “You’ll pay for that remark!” The lady in return feigns fear. It is at this point that the refrain seems to take a turn that is completely obscure. “It” in 6389 would seem to be the kiss under discussion, but if so it is difficult to see what to make of the following line. Reed says that “a lover is utterly stymied by his mistress until he threatens to beat her, which apparently so amply proves his virtue and love that she relents” (163).

6391–94 At the prospect of a kiss the lover instantly changes his tone (and presumably moves closer to his lady). The lady delivers the coup de grâce. Before he can “collect” the promised kiss, she out-wits him . . . but it is unclear how she does so.

6396 of yow y mysse: St identifies a later hand here, but I see only a variant of the hand of the main scribe, probably written later (there is no erasure).

- 6400-1 The penultimate line of each stanza (and the envoy) is octosyllabic, except for the third stanza.
- 6403 oren: S&D suggest that it is an error for *men*, *adj* "mean" (glossary). MED disagrees, taking it as a verb from *ore*, n2: "have mercy on, show favor to" (cf. *MilT* 3726; Prins, 280); they do not cross reference their own entry *aren* (also *or*; from OE *arian*): "to show mercy, forgive, treat gently, spare." The line, however, remains obscure.
- 6406 payne: apparently the verb is reflexive, with *mi karkas* (a contemptuous reference to himself) taking the place of *me*.
case: we might expect *tyme or space*, but Charles resists repeating a rhyme with the same meaning.
- 6414 If my reading is correct, *as* is an error for *vs*.
- 6411-12 wel parcas: just on the chance (S&D).
seven: see 4741n.
- 6413 No one has thus far been able to identify what the "pevisshe" eighth sin the lover fears is. Could it be dreaming of another lady? The passage is obscure as a result, and the paraphrase, very tentative.
- 6414 as: perhaps a scribal error for *us* (S&D).
- 6421 S&D observe, "This looks like an appeal to Fortune to be converted, but the tone of the ballade makes this unlikely." They suggest reading, "because of all thy frauds wilfully turned awry." The matter is simpler than this; the lover is asking Fortune to turn her wheel and show him her better "side."
- 6423-24 coffer: though citing only this line as an example, MED lists *coffer* as a variant spelling rather than an error.
- 6424 Cf. 5096.
- 6426-27 This ballade has a two-line refrain.
- 6430 were an horne: if the meaning "be mocked" is correct, the expression repeats the sense of the previous line (see 1829n).
- 6432 it: singular for plural; the referent is *mokkis*.
- 6439 thi iupart: the dangerous situation you put me in. In light of his earlier game of chess with Fortune, *iupart* probably carries some overtones of "stratagem (in the game)." Machaut, likewise, accuses Fortune, with "ta fausse loy" (your false law) and "ti faus tour" (your false turns) (Johnson, 51-52), but without the implication of Fortune's wheel suggested by the E meaning of the latter word and Charles's "revolue" in the preceding line.
- 6448-75 A poem on the delaying tactics of a lady, the "retorne" of the first line echoes 6439 and thereby suggests the presence of Fortune. The primary metaphor is of the lover following his lady (presumably on horseback) as she rambles ("guides" him) through the countryside. The lover clearly has trouble keeping up. This ballade is marked by complicated word play.
- 6450 twart: S&D gloss "oblique." Surely Charles is playing on the literal meaning of "difficult because crooked (zigzagging, circuitous)" and the figurative one of "adverse" or "froward" (OED, s.v. *athwart*, *overthwart*). He is saying in effect, "Don't play games, be straight with me."
pathis playne: cf. "weyes ny" (1293 and n).
- 6451 ouyrgone: S&D gloss "escape" (corrigenda), but in light of the following

- line "go too far" makes more sense. She is leading him a merry chase.
- 6453 forwery: on the use of this prefix, see OED, s.v. for-, *pref* 1, 6b.
- 6457 forgo: cf. *HF* 115 ("quite exhausted").
- 6463 Ye: probably an error for *I*.
- 6466 stilis: S&D suggest the word is a corruption of *sty* OED sb1 "a path or narrow way," but the word can simply mean "stile." Like *sty*, the phrase "strange stiles" evokes the idea of byways and country lanes.
- 6467-71 Here the point of the metaphor becomes clear. The lady is leading the lover in circles (or "down the garden path"), staying always out of his reach. He decries her behavior as sloth in love (6470). When the lady falls in love, he threatens, she will suffer as he does—or worse. The second half of the refrain line is a poignant return to 6467: she will be treated harshly, as the speaker is being treated. The idea of the punishment of ladies for sloth in love is familiar from Andreas Capellanus's fifth dialogue (Book 1), where they must sit on bundles of thorns and suffer the heat of the sun (112-15).
- 6472 S&D suggest that *or* and *y* (3) are probably scribal errors for *and* and *ye* (they do not provide a translation of the projected reading). On the other hand, the scribe is generally careful to place virgules between repeated words to insure that they are not miscopied or misread. As he writes "Soune ye or y / y / wolde / y vndirstood," that is probably the way he received his copy, but the meaning is obscure.
- 6476-97 The first stanza of the ballade is written in line pairs that alternate praise of the lady's virtues with blame for her lack of responsiveness. The *so*'s of this ballade are reminiscent of B 59, and, as in it, the technique does not work equally well in every line, e.g., 6488. Like *lo*, on occasion, *so* operates in many lines more like an initial beat (empty of meaning) than a meaningful word.
- 6485 On the rhymes *mystrust/dislust/wist/twyst* see Daunt, 147.
- 6488 for what cawse: i.e., why do you not desire to play the game of love.
- 6492, 6494 Apparently in the initial writing of this ballade the scribe wrote *as lo* and, to keep the rhyme, *forgo* (it may take final *-n* or not). This was probably not a matter of authorial revision, since the main scribe seems to have corrected as he went and does not seem to have returned to the manuscript later. Seeing his error, he corrected to *a lon* and *forgon*.
- 6494-95 S&D gloss, "If I do not speak of my sorrow, I shall die."
- 6501-2 The word order (in S&D's words, "extraordinary") has misled an MED editor (s.v. *ioy*), who reads, "Goo poor bille . . . For me to ioy my sorowis," and glosses *ioy* as "to enjoy."
- 6504 Goodrich suggests that the lover represents the poet, who is taking leave of his English lady to return to France (*Themes*, 102). Cf. R 60.
- 6507-8 sore: "wound" (6507); "sworn" (6508). For the second, OED gives a ppl form, *soren*, dated 1530 and pret *some*, 1531 (s.v. swear, II.10.d and ll.b). Cf. 3511 *sowre*.
- 6524-26 The padding in this line suggests that perhaps both it and 6526 were conceived in octosyllables and only partially "corrected." S&D suggest,

“now that I am given a way (i.e., an opportunity, by her absence) of weeping,” and further that *me* is omitted after *on* in 6526 (“If this be error, and upon me proved,” Shakespeare, Sonnet 116). Though it is oddly phrased and repetitious, the meaning of the passage is clear. The lover applies the old saw, “love is blind,” to himself: he is afraid that he will, unawares (i.e., blindly), give himself away by his sighs—in spite of himself.

- 6531 The final line “biwrays” that the lover is still not through with love, in spite of his farewells to his lady. The reader can imagine little except the endless continuation of this peevish love for an unkind lady. No counselor is forthcoming; the lover has no will to withdraw his “eternal” loyalty from his lady; and, even if his lady were to die, he is not himself likely to do so, in spite of the precedent set by Chartier (who presents a bereaved narrator and an unsuccessful lover who dies). Charles may have expected his readers to ask themselves at this point, “From which of the two loves did the lover suffer more?”

Glossary

The glossary is much fuller than might be expected for a text of the first half of the fifteenth century because of the unusual character of the language. Charles's English is difficult for a variety of reasons (surveyed in the Introduction, "The Language of the Poems"), and thus an overview of Charles's language would seem to be more useful than a glossary of hard words. If I have erred on the side of fullness, I trust some creative scholar will find interesting material amidst the superfluity. Though the glossary represents every form in Charles of Orleans's English, it is not intended as an exhaustive glossary (or a full concordance). The reader should be cautioned, however, not to account every entry he recognizes as superfluous; in some cases an entry has been included because it performs an unusual grammatical function within a clause, because it has more than one spelling, or because another possible definition of the word in question is being excluded. The large number of entries should facilitate the reader's comparison of passages.

The glossary includes an overview of the poet's usages based on a survey of all occurrences of each word. All occurrences not accounted for fall under the definition that is followed by (usually the first) three instances plus "etc." (except in a few cases where such precision seemed out of place). All words inserted by the two revisors, A and B, are included, as are all (readable) words crossed out or otherwise marked for correction. In cases where no infinitive or singular form occurs in the text, the oblique or plural form is used as the headword.

The glossary is intended to be as easy to use as possible. To avoid sending the reader on multiple searches (and to make the material available to scholars interested in Charles's language), all alternate spellings are listed as headwords except where they occur within a few lines of each other. Verbs, however, are drawn together under a single headword (with all other forms following the entry). In general, *u/v* and *i/y* are treated alphabetically as *u* and *i* when vocalic, as *v* and *y* when consonantal (the headword spelling being chosen on the basis of frequency). The semi-vowel *y* follows *w*.¹ Initial *þ* is expanded to *th*.

Multiple spellings of the headword are listed in descending order of frequency. In those cases in which two spellings are represented in one word, e.g., *thyn(ne)*, both spellings occur about equally. Where the difference in spelling is only a final *-e*, *-n*, or *-se* and that ending occurs three times or fewer

¹ The capital forms of *y*, *i*, and *j* are identical, as are small *j* and *i*. In those cases where these letters occur in the manuscript in the capital form, I have retained that form in the glossary, even though all other letters there are small. I have not attempted to distinguish between a number of closely-related pairs of words, such as *mo/more*, *part/party*, the two meanings of the verb *will* (OE *willan/willian*), *fecche* (OE *fecc(e)an/feitan*), and many other pairs which are frequently interchanged in the Middle English period.

(whereas the primary word occurs significantly more often), it is more space-efficient to present: *confoundl-e* (5:1 occurrences), *chesel-n* (9:3), *distresl-se* (32:2). Final *-e* is in many cases a variant which appears only once in the manuscript. Line numbers are given for at least a representative sample of all minority spellings (a great many of which occur in rhyme position). With a little effort (more in the case of common verbs), therefore, the reader should be able to locate an example of any spelling in the text.

I have also attempted to give the reader, as unobtrusively as possible, some idea of where Charles's English stands vis-à-vis the rest of the known Middle English sources by placing ♦ after every line reference which is cited in the *Middle English Dictionary* (I am sure to have missed some of them), U after any line reference which is cited as the only instance of the word, and O after any *part* of the entry (word, part of speech, definition, etc.) which is not attested there at all. Mossé's glossary has provided a model for this system, though my purpose is quite different from his. In cases where the spelling used by the *MED* differs significantly from that found in the Harleian manuscript, the dictionary spelling is entered in square brackets to facilitate comparison; in a few cases an Old English or Old French form is given. The *OED* is not superfluous in such an undertaking, even for the words already dealt with by the *MED*, and the reader will encounter regular references to it in the explanatory notes. I have relied primarily on Skeat's glossary and the *Chaucer Glossary* for Chaucerian usage. The Stratmann and Bradley dictionary of Middle English as well as glossaries which accompany late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century editions have been plundered on occasion.

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|---|
| <i>n</i> | noun | <i>prp</i> | present participle |
| <i>v</i> | verb | <i>ppl</i> | past participle |
| <i>adj</i> | adjective | <i>imp</i> | imperative |
| <i>adv</i> | adverb | <i>refl</i> | reflexive |
| <i>pron</i> | pronoun | <i>subj</i> | subjunctive |
| <i>prep</i> | preposition | <i>pass</i> | passive |
| <i>conj</i> | conjunction | <i>(in)trans</i> | (in)transitive |
| <i>interj</i> | interjection | <i>ger</i> | gerund |
| <i>art</i> | article | § | see explanatory note |
| <i>s</i> | singular | * | not in MED (most are commented on in the notes) |
| <i>pl</i> | plural | ♦ | cited in MED |
| <i>poss</i> | possessive | <i>U</i> | unique (only witness in MED) |
| <i>comp</i> | comparative | <i>r</i> | occurs in refrain (more than once) |
| <i>sup</i> | superlative | | |
| <i>pres</i> | present | | |
| <i>prt</i> | preterite | | |

A

Charles of Orleans prefixes a number of verbs with *a-* which are not so attested elsewhere. Inasmuch as the addition of the prefix does not alter the meaning of the word and the prefixed form was probably often used for many verbs which have not survived in print, I have not marked those anomalous forms with a *. I have, however, glossed verbs that occur in both forms (with and without *a-*) separately.

a, *art* 41, 90, 95, etc.
a, *interj* Ah!, 1421, 1548, 2030, 4123, 5088, 5113, 5335
a, *prep* 1. in, 198, 491, 918, 2228, 2968, 4309, 4391, 4401, 4806, 4961, 5338; 2. of, 5011
a, *pron* 1. he, 919, 1097, 1850, 2316, 2492, 2508, 2804, 2901, 3368, 3770, 3992; 2. it, 2499, 3245
abaft, *adv* (from) behind, 695
abak, *adv* back, 958
abay, *v* submit, 3878; *also obay*; *see also beying, bow*
abasid, *ppl* as *adj* abashed, 6203
abeggyng, *v prp* begging, 903; *see also begge v*
aby/abey, *v* 1. pay the penalty (for), 4238, 4272, 6388; 2. pay the penalty/buy dearly, 4124; 3. suffer because of, 6345; *see also bie*
abide/abiden, *v* 1. remain, wait (for), 1045, 1258r, 1347, etc.; 2. endure, 303, 3114, 3463, 3676; 3. awaiting, 205, 251; 4. tarry, 3877; 5. abide by, 6280; *prp abidyng*
abidyng, *n* delay, 279
abite, *n* garment, 1542
able, *adj* fit, 5402
abone, *adj* [bon] good, 45
abo(o)d(e), *n* period of waiting, 571, 6452
aboue, *prep* above, 203, 1140, 1563, etc.
aboue, *adv* in public view, openly, 4973
ab(o)undaunce, *n* abundance, 549, 704

abound(e), *v ~ in*: to overflow (with), 422; come abundantly, 735, 1958
abowt, *prep* about, 163, 2305, 4764, 4971, 4989, 5021
abowt, *adv* 1. around, 166, 1004, 3054, etc.; 2. around, here and there, 5238; *also bowt*
*abrace**, *v* embrace, 876
abreide, *v* 1. utter, 4785; 2. started, recovered (from my astonishment), 5064; 3. awoke, 5190; *prt abreid/abrayde*; *see also brayd*
abrod, *adv* so as to cover, 5035
absence, *n* absence, 516, 523, 1031, etc.
absent, *adj* absent, 553, 774, 1185, etc.; ~ *payne*: pain of absence*, 1896
absent, *n* absence, 1185
accord(e), *v* 1. grant, 667; 2. record, 1111; 3. accord, 2246, 5413; 4. reconcile, 6346; 3s *accordith*; *imp pl accordith*
accordyng, *adj* harmonious, 5771
acesyne, *v* put an end to, 1836
achase, *v* chase 1018, 3075; *ppl achasid*; *see also chas*
achere, *v* [chere] 1. console, 438, 3469; 2. bring (me) to feel, 4120; *see also chere*
acheue/acheven, *v* 1. win, 4702; 2. succeed in, 4387
aclere, *v* clear away, 1711 ♦U
acort, *n* accord, 1060
acqu-, *see aqu-*
acursid/acurst, *adj* 1. damned, 951r, 2005; 2. malicious, 4584
adewre, *v* [duren] live, 2485; *see also dewre, endure*
aduersayre, *n* enemy, 778
aduersite, *n* 1. misfortune, adversity, 324, 405, 560, etc.; 2. hostility, 2685
aduert, *v* 1. discover, 2433, 3352; 2. consider, be heedful, 2710, 2773, 3204 *refl*, 5928; 3. devise, 69; 4. make (the) observation, 308, 5880; 5. suppose, 3395; *hit doth me ~*: it seems to me, 2212♦; *see also avert*

- advise, *n* advice, 1006; *also advise*
 afer, *adv* 1. far off, 162; 2. from afar,
 4767; *see also fer*
 aferd, *v ppl* 1. afraid, 3884; 2. as *adj*
 frightened, 4836
 affayt, *v* attack, 30
 affyaunce, *n* 1. confidence, 686, 724,
 1648; 2. solemn promise, 2964;
 3. friend, companion (i.e., trust-
 ed one)*, 1057, 1122, 4591; *see*
also fyaunce
 affynyte, *n* confederates, 26, 5903,
 5911, etc.
 affoyle, *v* [foil *n*] to adorn with
 leaves, 1701 ♦U
 affray, *n* 1. consternation, 1715; 2.
 disturbance, 5439
 afyn, *adv* **right wel** ~: to good pur-
 pose, 5132
 afyn, *n* [Ar. *al-fil*, "elephant"]
 bishop, 2124
 afyre, *adj* on fire, 1426, 2446
 afoot*, *adv* on my feet, 5195
 afore, *adv* 1. before, 865r, 1851r,
 5318; 2. earlier, 4656, 5318
 afresht, *v ppl* [freshen] resupplied
 (the ship), 1038; *see also fresshe*
 afright, *v* become frightened, 255
 aftir, 1. after, 541, 1541, 2237, etc.;
 2. afterwards, 1110, 2556, 6163;
 3. in, 93, 1065; 4. in keeping
 with, 10, 137, 1983; 5. for, 1302;
 6. concerning, 2274; **in ~ tyme**
comyng: at some time in the
 future, 692
 aftirmore*, *adv* henceforth, 4104 §
 aftirson, *adv* soon thereafter, 1791
 aftirward, *adv* afterwards, 4742,
 4751
 agayne/ageyn(e)/ayen(e), *adv* 1. again,
 650, 1125, 1483, 2210, 2374r,
 2432r, etc.; 2. in return, back
 (again), 97, 2503, 2532, 3978,
 5389, 5569, 5583r, 5609, 5641,
 5671; 3. moreover, 97, 2768,
 3021, 5315, 6137, 6448; 4.
 (once) again, 3759, 5592, 6022,
 6174, 6516; 5. in reply, 2403,
 2923, 6137; 6. on the other
 hand, 385; 7. each time, 1352;
then ~: on the other hand, 1483;
see also ageyne
 agarnesshe, *v ppl* equipped for de-
 fence, 1077; *see also garnysshid*
 agast, *adj* frightened, 5741; *see also*
gast
 age, *n* age, 2558, 2603, 2645, 3731
 ageyn(e)/ageyns/agayne/ayen(st)/
 agaynst, *prep* 1. against, 26, 295,
 885 [erased], 1062, 1050, 1071,
 1753, 2251, 2270, 2276, 3041,
 3759, 3930r, 4945, 5764, 6487,
 6489; 2. in preparation for, 2170,
 2652; 3. as *adj* contrary (to his
 will), 2388; *see also geyne*
 ageynward, on the contrary, 4320
 agide, *v* manage, direct, 2232
 agoo(n), *ppl* as *adv* 1. ago, 350; 2.
 past, 797; **longe** ~: for a long
 time*, 606 §; **late** ~: recently,
 1309; **tyme** ~: some (?a long)
 time ago, 1434
 agoon, *v ppl* 1. gone, 5092; 2. (be)
 gone, depart, 5319
 agraunt, *v* grant, 2868; *see also graunt*
 agre/-e, *v* 1. agree (to), consent,
 3941 *refl*, 5369, 5986, 6042; 2.
 be reconciled to, 316; 3. recon-
 cile, 3941; 4. approve (of), 4302;
 5. compensate, 5763
 agreeable, *adj* pleasing, 2677
 agrise, *v* 1. frighten, 1342; 2. shud-
 der with fear, 1032
 ahim, *interj* Ahem!, 113
 ay, *n* egg, 1194, 4193, 4779
 ay, *adv* 1. always, constantly, 1291,
 1667, 1822, etc.; 2. always, for-
 ever, 520, 585, 596, 2283, 2314,
 2332, 2414, 2522, 2787, 2828,
 4048, 4328, 4574, 4623, 4885,
 5458, 5745, 6102; 3. again and
 again, ever, 507, 1236, 1254,
 2120, 2154, 2502, 2536, 2873,
 3087, 3293, 3840, 4048, 4844,
 4859, 5990, 5992; 4. continually,
 507, 2223, 2808, 3213, 3840; 5.
 regularly, 1710; 6. earlier, 2798;
 7. in each instance, 3087; 8. pro-
 gressively, 5055
 ayde, *v* to aid, 19, 937, 1100, 2573;
stonde in ~: stand firm in sup-
 port, 6356

- ayelde, *v* repay, 878; *see also* **yelde**
 ayen(st), *see* **agayne** *adv*; **ageyne**
prep
 ayre, *n* heir, 2148r; *also* **eyre**, **heyre**
 ayre, *n* air, 4763, 4965; **vndir** ~: on
 earth, 772
 al, *see* **all**
 alace, *interj*, *see* **allas**
 alak, *interj* alack!, 338, 894, 902, etc.
 alase, *interj*, *see* **allas**
 albe, *conj* (with *it, that, so*) 1. even if,
 although, 211, 624, 654, 3230,
 3519, 3581, 4211, 6316; 2. [*al*
 (although) *be*], 880, 6530; *see also*
alle *conj*
 alday, *adv* continually, 4196
 ale, *n* ale, 3118
 alesse, *v* alleviate, 1537, 5642
 alfordrownyd, *adj* [fordrowned (per-
 haps *al fordrownyd*)] completely
 drenched, 1986
 algate, *adv* 1. altogether, 2575; 2.
 unceasingly, 6159
 alight, *v* 1. relieve, 2805, 3675; 2.
 lighten, 3901r; 3s **alightith**; *ppl*
alightid; *see also* **light**
 alite, *adv* a little, 4033, 4076
 alyue, *adj* alive, 6210
 allas/alas/-e/alace, *interj* allas!, 78,
 105, 2243, 4463, etc.
 all/alle, *adj* 1. all, 2, 59, 202, etc.; 2.
 everything, 2374r, 2570, 2834,
 2874, 3420, 4476, 4753, 6175,
 6234r; 3. (the) whole, 275, 2152,
 2461, 2969, 3606, 4160, 5036,
 5177; 4. all (of this/them), 4016,
 5204; 5. every way, 20; 6. the
 greatest, 660; 7. everyone, 4955
 all/alle, *adv* 1. wholly, entirely, 550,
 592, 595, 751, 814, 1527, 1982,
 2134, 2304, 3083, 3376, 4067r,
 4310, 4343, 4554, 4827, 5035,
 5633, 5750, 5774, 5781, 5832,
 6223, 6296, 6457; 2. very, 2420,
 2487, 4932, 5164; 3. fully, 747
 (2); 4. all over, 4991; 5. [em-
 phatic], 983, 4619, 6005; ~ **to**
nigh: altogether, 625, 5832; ~ **to**
longe: (for) far too long, 1412,
 4607; ~ **thing**: altogether, 4760
 all/alle, *conj* [also: ~ **be** (hit so)] 1.
 although, 261, 582, 624, 654,
 737, 747, 812, 858, 1234, 1478,
 2186, 2400, 2519, 2706, 3079,
 4211, 4619, 4739, 4937, 5112,
 5629, 5673, 5678, 5732, 5762,
 6232, 6239; 2. even though, 2186,
 5355; 3. whether, 5678, 5762
 allegeaunce, *n* relief, 698
 alls, *see* **also** *adv*
 all thing, *pron* everything, 5949
 allyaunce, *n* 1. party, (group of)
 allies, 299, 725, 877, 1009, 3393;
 2. (an) alliance, 1072; 3. treaty,
 1106 §; **of my** ~: on my side,
 1767; *see also* **allyes**
 allyed, *ppl* allied, 1515
 allyes, *n pl* allies, 1005; *see also* **ally-**
auce
 almes, *n* 1. pity, (act of) mercy,
 1377, 2803, 3698; 2. alms, 906,
 908; 3. merit earned for works of
 charity, 932
 almes(se), *v** give (as alms), 2521r §,
 4221r, 4227r
 almyght/almyghti/almyghty, *adj* al-
 mighty, 468, 1286, 1782, 3905,
 6125
 almost, *adv* almost, 2331
 aloft, *adv* 1. up in the sky, 2456,
 5171, 6311; 2. on high, 2187; 3.
 on top, 5047; **set(te)** ~: set(s) on
 high, i.e., make(s) happy, 392,
 1460, 1738
 alone/aloon/alon, *adj* alone, 590r,
 1826, 2012, etc.
 alone/alo(o)n/aone [error], *adv* alone,
 2046, 2057, 2061r, etc.
 als(o)/allys/alls [revision], *adv* 1. also,
 1044, 1157, 1297, 2179, 3699 §,
 etc.; 2. and another question,
 1915, 5480; 3. moreover, 243;
also **as**
 als(o), *conj* as, since, 243, 1096,
 2283, 4440; *also* **as**
 alsolong, *adv* as long, 3176
 althermost, *adv* most of all, 4039
 although, *conj* although, 1452, 1763,
 3353
 alway/alwey, *adv* 1. always, 971,
 1213, 3039, etc.; 2. every time,
 3626; 3. forever, 4960

- alwhere, *adv* everywhere*, 3772
 am, *see* **ben**
 am [error for *an*], 4724
 amende/-n, *v* 1. rectify, 1448, 1869, 2135, 5524 *subj*, etc.; 2. improve on, 453, 3087; 3. forgive, 4384; 4. cure (the hurt), 4689; 5. improve (my lot), 6155; *see also* **mende**
 amende(s), *n* 1. reparation, amends, 1569; 2. remedy, 6213
 amendement, *n* redress, 2629
 amys, *adj* 1. wrong, 3218, 6416; 2. amiss, 5826, 6154
 amys, *adv* 1. badly, amiss, 601, 6449; 2. mistakenly, wrongly, 5093; **did fer** ~: did a great wrong, 4887; **say** ~: speak evil, 5875r; *also* **mys**, **messe**
 amytte, *v* receive (as a member of one's household), 6; **amyttyd to grace**: received into (the lady's) favor, 2488, 4007
 among, *prep* 1. among, 916, 995, 3125, 4423, 4700, 5050, 5207; 2. together 3117; 3. continually, 3133; 4. here and there, at some time or other, 3137
 amongis, *prep* (from) amongst, 5788
 amverse*/avmferse*, *n* [inverse (POF envers)] reverse, contrary, 2491r; **in** ~: into (its) contrary, 2373 §, 5847r
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